

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

VOL. XXXII.



"SHE STOPPED, LIKE A CLOCK."

THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JULY, 1875.

The Band of Ethelberta.

CHAPTER I.

A STREET IN ANGLEBURY—A HEATH NEAR—INSIDE THE
"OLD FOX INN."



YOUNG Mrs. Petherwin stepped from the door of an old though popular inn in a Wessex town to take a country walk. By her look and carriage she appeared to belong to that gentle order of society which has no worldly sorrow except when its jewellery gets stolen; but, as a fact not generally known, her claim to distinction was rather one of brains than of blood. She was a respectable butler's daughter, and began life as a baby christened Ethelberta (after an infant of title who does not come into the story at all, having

merely furnished to Ethelberta's mother a means of occupying herself as head nurse); she became teacher in a school, rose to be a superior governess by her own ingenuity, was praised by examiners, admired by gentlemen, not admired by gentlewomen, and stealthily married by the son of the mistress of the mansion. He died from a chill caught

on the wedding tour, and that action affording to Lady Petherwin, his mother, a sufficient reason for forgiving all concerned, she took in hand the forlorn girl—who seemed rather a detached bride than a widow—finished her education by placing her in a boarding-school at Bonn, and had lately brought her to England to live in the same house as companion.

The elegant young lady, as she had a full right to be called if she cared for the definition, arrested all the local attention when she emerged into the summer-evening light with that diadem-and-sceptre bearing—many people for reasons of heredity discovering it only in those whose vestibules are lined with ancestral mail bought several years ago at the lowest reckoning, forgetting how soon a bear may be taught to dance. While this air of hers lasted, even the inanimate objects in the street appeared to know that she was there; but from a way she had of carelessly overthrowing her dignity by versatile moods, one could not calculate upon its presence to a certainty when she was round corners or in little lanes which demanded no repression of animal spirits.

"Well to be sure!" exclaimed a milkman, regarding her. "We should freeze in our beds if 'twere not for the sun, and, dang me! if she isn't a pretty piece. A man could make a meal between them eyes and chin—eh, hostler? Odd nation dang my old sides if he couldn't!" The speaker, who had been carrying a pair of pails on a yoke, deposited them upon the edge of the pavement in front of the inn, and straightened his back to an excruciating perpendicular. His remarks had been addressed to a rickety person, wearing a waistcoat of that preternatural length from the top to the bottom button which prevails among men who have to do with horses. He was sweeping straws from the carriage-way beneath the stone arch that formed a passage to the stables behind.

"Never mind the cursing and swearing, or somebody who's never out of hearing may clap yer name down in his black book afore you know it," said the hostler, also pausing, and lifting his eyes to the mullioned and transomed windows and moulded parapet above him—not to study them as features of ancient architecture, but just to give as healthful a stretch to the eyes as his acquaintance had done to his back. "Michael, a old man like you ought to think about other things, and not be looking two ways at your time of life. Pouncing upon young flesh like a carrion crow—'tis a vile thing in a old man."

"'Tis, and yet 'tis not, for 'tis a naterel taste," said the milkman, again surveying Ethelberta, who had now paused upon a bridge in full view, to look down the river. "Now, if a poor needy feller like myself could only catch her alone when she's dressed up to the nines for some grand party, and carry her off to some lonely place—sakes, what a pot of jewels and goold things I warrant he'd find about her! 'Twould pay en for his trouble."

"I don't dispute the pieter; but 'tis sly and untimely to think such roguery. Though I've had thoughts like it, 'tis true, about high women—Lord forgive me for't."

"And that figure of fashion standing there is a widow-woman, so I hear?"

"Lady—not a penny less than lady. Ay, a thing of twenty-one or thereabouts."

"A widow-lady and twenty-one. 'Tis a backward age for a body who's so forward in her state of life."

"Well, be that 'as 'twill, here's my showings for her age. She was about the figure of two or three-and-twenty when 'a got off coach last night, tired out wi' boaming about the country; and nineteen this morning when she came downstairs after a sleep round the clock and a clane washed face; so I thought to myself, twenty-one, I thought."

"And what's the young woman's name, make so bold, hostler?"

"Ay, and the house were all in a stoor with her and the old woman, and their boxes and camp-kettles, that they carry to wash in because hand-basons bain't big enough, and I don't know what all; and t'other folk stopping here were no more than dirt thencefor'ard."

"I suppose they've come out of some noble city a long way herefrom?"

"And there was her hair up in buckle as if she'd never seed a clay-cold man at all. However, to cut a long story short, all I know besides about 'em is that the name upon their luggage is Lady Petherwin, and she's the widow of a city gentleman-shopman, who was made a Knight-Templar for being a man of valour in the Lord Mayor's Show."

"Who's that chap in the gaiters and pack at his back, come out of the door but now?" said the milkman, nodding towards a figure of that description who had just emerged from the inn and trudged off in the direction taken by the lady—now out of sight.

"Chap in the gaiters? Chok' it all—why the father of that nobleman that you call chap in the gaiters used to be hand in glove with half the Queen's court."

"What d'ye tell o'!"

"That man's father was one of the mayor and corporation of Sandbourne, and was that familiar with men of money, that he'd slap 'em upon the shoulder as you or I or any other poor fool would the clerk of the parish."

"Oh, what's my lordlin's name, make so bold, then?"

"Ay, the toppermost class now-a-days have left off the use of wheels for the good of their constitutions, so they traipse and walk for many years up foreign hills, where you can see nothing but snow and fog, till there's no more left to walk up; and if they reach home alive, and ha'n't got too old and wearied out, they walk and see a little of their own parishes. So they tower about with a pack and a stick and a clane white pocket-handkerchief over their hats just as you see he's got on his. He's been staying here a night, and is off now again. 'Young man, young man,' I think to myself, 'if your shoulders were bent like a bandy and your knees bowed out as mine be, till there is not an inch of straight bone or gristle in 'ee, th' wouldstn't go doing hard work for play 'a b'lieve.'"

"True, true, upon my song. Such a pain as I have had in the small of my back all this day to be sure: words don't know what shipwreck I suffer in this back o' mine—that they do not!"

"And what was this young widow-lady's maiden name, then, hostler? Folk have been peeping after her, that's true; but they don't seem to know much about her family."

"And while I've tended horses fifty year that other folk might straddle 'em, here I be now not a penny the better! Often-times, when I see so many good things about, I feel inclined to help myself in common justice to my pocket.

Work hard and be poor,
Do nothing and get more.

But I draw in the horns of my mind and think to myself, 'Forbear, John Hostler, forbear!'—Her maiden name? Faith, I don't know the woman's maiden name, though she said to me, 'Good-evening John;' but I had no memory of ever seeing her afore—no, no more than the dead inside church-hatch—where I shall soon be likewise—I had not. 'Ay, my nabs,' I think to myself, 'more know Tom Fool than Tom Fool knows.'

"More know Tom Fool—what rambling old canticle is it you say, hostler?" inquired the milkman, lifting his ear. "Let's have it again—a good saying well spit out is a Christmas fire to my withered heart. More know Tom Fool—"

"Than Tom Fool knows," said the hostler.

"Ah! That's the very feeling I've feelled over and over again, hostler, but not in such gifted language. 'Tis a thought I've had in me more or less for years, and never could lick into shape!—O-ho-ho-ho! Splendid! Say it again, hostler, say it again! To hear my own poor notion that had no name brought into form like that—I wouldn't ha' lost it for the world! More know Tom Fool than—than—h-ho-ho-ho-ho!"

"Don't let your cheerful soul break out in such a heathen uproar, for heaven's sake, or folk will surely think you've been laughing at the lady and gentleman. Well, here's at it again—Night t'ee, Michael." And the hostler went on with his sweeping.

"Night t'ee, hostler, I must move too," said the milkman, shouldering his yoke, and walking off; and there reached the inn in a gradual diminuendo, as he receded up the street, shaking his head convulsively, "More know—Tom fool—than Tom fool—ho-ho-ho-ho-ho!"

The "Old Fox," as the inn or hotel was called which of late years had become the fashion among tourists, because of the absence from its precincts of all that was fashionable and new, stood on the border of the town, without having been built there. In the course of time houses had been pulled down at one end of the place, and new ones erected at the other, which lay towards the railway station: thus the inn had passed from middle to outside in consequence of its sheer unchangeableness, just as in the mobility of parties a consistent man of long life may, somewhat to

his surprise, be a person of advanced views in youth and of retrograde principles in old age, by the mere fact of remaining just the same.

Standing now as the northern bulwark of the town, the hostel formed a corner where in winter the winds whistled and assembled their forces previous to plunging helter-skelter along the streets. In summer it was a fresh and pleasant spot, convenient for such quiet characters as sojourned there to study the geology and beautiful natural features of the country round.

The lady whose appearance had asserted a difference between herself and the Anglebury people, without too clearly showing what that difference was, passed out of the high-road in a few moments after leaving the bridge, and she soon got into a lonely valley, which, at its further end, spread out into a flat heath. She had walked to the beginning of this dead level, watching the base of a cloud as it closed down upon the line of a distant ridge, like an upper upon a lower eyelid, and shut in the evening sun. She was then about to return before dusk came on, when she heard a commotion in the air immediately behind and above her head. The saunterer looked up and saw a wild-duck flying along with the greatest violence, just in its rear being another large bird, which a countryman would have pronounced to be one of the biggest duck-hawks that he had ever beheld. The hawk neared its intended victim, and the duck screamed and redoubled its efforts.

Ethelberta impulsively started off in a rapid run that would have made a little dog bark with delight and run after, her object being, if possible, to see the end of this desperate struggle for a life so small and unheard-of. Her stateliness went away, and it could be forgiven for not remaining; for her feet suddenly became as quick as fingers, and she raced along over the uneven ground with such force of tread that, being a woman slightly heavier than gossamer, her patent heels punched little D's in the soil with unerring accuracy wherever it was bare, crippled the heather-twigs where it was not, and sucked the swampy places with a sound of quick kisses. Her rate of advance was not to be compared with that of the two birds, though she went swiftly enough to keep them well in sight in such an open place as that around her, having at one point in the journey been so near that she could hear the whisk of the duck's feathers against the wind as it lifted and lowered its wings. When the bird seemed to be but a few yards from its enemy she saw it strike downwards, and after a level flight of a quarter of a minute, vanish. The hawk swooped after, and Ethelberta now perceived a whitely shining oval of still water, looking amid the swarthy level of the heath like a hole through into a nether sky. Into this large pond, which the duck had been making towards from the beginning of its precipitate flight, it had dived out of sight. The excited and breathless runner was in a few moments close enough to see the disappointed hawk hovering and floating in the air as if waiting for the reappearance of its prey, upon which grim pastime it was so intent that by creeping along softly she was enabled to get very near the edge of the

pool and witness clearly the conclusion of the episode. Whenever the duck was under the necessity of showing its head to breathe, the other bird would dart towards it, invariably too late, however; for the diver was far too experienced in the rough humour of the buzzard family at this game to come up twice near the same spot, unaccountably emerging from opposite sides of the pool in succession, and bobbing again by the time its adversary reached each place; so that at length the hawk gave up the contest and flew away, a satanic moodiness being almost perceptible in the motion of its wings.

The young lady now looked around her for the first time, and began to perceive that she had run a long distance—very much farther than she had originally intended to come. Her eyes had been so long fixed upon the hawk, as it soared against the bright though mottled field of sky, that on regarding the heather and plain again it was as if she had returned to a half forgotten region after an absence, and the whole prospect was darkened to one uniform shade by approaching night. She began at once to retrace her steps, but having been indiscriminately wheeling round the pond to get a good view of the performance, and having followed no path thither, she found the proper direction of her journey to be a matter of some uncertainty. "Surely," she said to herself, "I faced the west at starting;" and yet on walking now with her back where her face had been, she did not approach the notch in the horizon which was all that remained of the valley by the town. Thus dubiously, but with little real concern, she walked on till the evening lights began to turn to dusk, and the shadows to darkness.

Presently in front of her Ethelberta saw a white spot in the shade, and it proved to be in some way attached to the head of a man who was coming towards her out of a slight depression in the ground. It was as yet too early in the evening to be afraid, but it was too late to be altogether courageous; and with balanced sensations Ethelberta kept her eye sharply upon him as he rose by degrees into view. The puggery arrangement of his head-dress soon struck her as being what she had casually noticed hanging on a peg in one of the rooms of the "Old Fox" the night before, and when he came close she saw that his arms diminished to a peculiar smallness at their junction with his shoulders, like those of a doll, a phenomenon which was explained by their being girt round at that point with the straps of a knapsack that he carried behind him. Encouraged by the probability that he, like herself, was staying or had been staying at the "Old Fox," she said, "Can you tell me if this is the way back to Anglebury?"

"It is one way; but the nearest is in this direction," said the tourist—the same who had been criticised by the two old men.

At hearing him speak all the delicate activities in the young lady's person stood still: she stopped like a clock. When she could again fence with the perception which had caused all this, she breathed, "Mr. Julian!" she exclaimed, in a way which would have told anybody in a

moment that here lay something connected with the light of other days.

"Ah, Mrs. Petherwin!—Yes, I am Mr. Julian—though that can matter very little, I should think, after all these years, and what has passed."

No remark was returned to this rugged reply, and he continued unconcernedly, "Shall I put you in the path—it is just here?"

"If you please."

"Come with me, then."

She walked in silence at his heels, not a word passing between them all the way; and the sole noises which came from them were the brushing of her dress and his gaiters against the heather, or the smart rap of a stray flint against his boot.

They had now reached a little knoll, and he turned abruptly: "That is Anglebury—just where you see those lights. The path down there is the one you must follow: it leads round the hill yonder and directly into the town."

"Thank you," she murmured, and found that he had never removed his eyes from her since speaking, keeping them fixed with mathematical exactness upon one point in her face. She moved a little to go on her way; he moved a little less—to go on his.

"Good-night," said Mr. Julian.

The moment, upon the very face of it, was critical; and yet it was one of those which have to wait for a future before they acquire a definite character as good or bad. We often figure in junctures about which we can foresee that "O that time!" will some day be our habitual thought, even while we do not at all foresee the tone, bright or mournful, that the thought will wear.

Thus much would have been obvious to any outsider; it may have been doubly so to Ethelberta, for she gave back more than she had got, replying "Good-bye—if you are going to say no more."

Then it struck Mr. Julian: "What can I say? You are nothing to me. . . I could forgive a woman doing anything for spite, except marrying for spite."

"The connection of that with our present meeting does not appear, unless it refers to what you have done. It does not refer to me."

"I am not married; you are."

She did not contradict him, as she might have done. "Christopher," she said at last, "this is how it is: you knew too much of me to respect me, and too little to pity me. A half knowledge of another's life mostly does injustice to the life half known."

"Then since circumstances forbid my knowing you more, I must do my best to know you less, and elevate my opinion of your nature by forgetting what it consists in," he said, in a voice from which all feeling was polished away.

"If I did not know that bitterness had more to do with those words than judgment, I—should be—bitter too! You never knew half about

me: you only knew me as a governess; you little think what my beginnings were."

"I have guessed. I have many times told myself that your early life was superior to your position when I first met you. I think I may say without presumption that I recognize a lady by birth when I see her, even under reverses of an extreme kind. And certainly there is this to be said, that the fact of having been bred in a wealthy home does slightly redeem an attempt to attain to such a one again."

Ethelberta smiled a smile of many meanings.

"However, we are wasting words," he resumed, cheerfully. "It is better for us to part as we met, and continue to be the strangers that we have become to each other. I owe you an apology for having been betrayed into more feeling than I had a right to show, and let us part friends. Good-night, Ethelberta, and success to you. May meet again, some day, you know."

"Good-night," she said, extending her hand. He touched it, turned about, and in a short time nothing remained of him but quick regular brushings against the heather in the deep broad shadow of the moor.

Ethelberta slowly moved on in the direction that he had pointed out. This meeting had surprised her in several ways. First there was the conjuncture itself; but more than that was the fact that he had not parted from her with any of the tragic resentment that she had from time to time imagined for that scene if it ever occurred. Yet there was really nothing wonderful in this, for it is part of the generous nature of a bachelor that, after years of separation, he is never indisposed to forgive a portionless sweetheart who, by marrying elsewhere when engaged several years deep to him, deprived him of the bliss of being obliged to marry her himself. Ethelberta would have been disappointed quite had there not been a comforting development of exasperation in the middle part of his talk; but after all it formed a poor substitute for the loving hatred she had expected.

When she reached the hotel the lamp over the door showed a face a little flushed, but the agitation which at first had possessed her was gone to a mere nothing. In the hall she met a little woman wearing a silk dress of that peculiar black which in sunlight proclaims itself to have once seen better days as a brown, and days even better than these as a lavender, green, or blue.

"Menlove," said the lady, "did you notice if any gentleman observed and followed me when I left the hotel to go for a walk this evening?"

The lady's-maid, thus suddenly pulled up in a night forage after lovers, put a hand to her forehead to show that there was no mistake about her having begun to meditate on receiving orders to that effect, and said at last, "You once told me, ma'am, if you recollect, that when you were dressed, I was not to go staring out of the window after you as if you were a doll I had just manufactured and sent round for sale."

"Yes, so I did." So I didn't see if anybody followed you this evening." "Then did you hear any gentleman arrive here by the late train last night?"

"O no, ma'am—how could I?" said Mrs. Menlove—an exclamation which was more apposite than her mistress suspected, considering that the speaker, after retiring from duty, had slipped down her dark skirt to reveal a light, puffed, and festooned one, put on a hat and feather, together with several pennyweights of metal in the form of rings, brooches, and earrings—all in a time whilst one could count a hundred—and enjoyed half an hour of prime courtship by an honourable young waiter, who had proved constant as the magnet to the pole for the space of the day and a half that she had known him, returning home then and falling asleep the instant she was in bed—small blame to Mrs. Menlove for her enterprise.

Going at once upstairs, Ethelberta ran down the passage, and after some hesitation softly opened the door of the sitting-room of the best suite of apartments that the inn could boast of.

In this room sat an elderly lady writing by the light of two candles with green shades. Well knowing, as it seemed, who the intruder was, she continued her occupation, and her visitor advanced and stood beside the table. The old lady wore her spectacles low down her cheek, her glance being depressed to about the slope of her straight white nose in order to look through them. Her mouth was pursed up to an almost youthful shape as she formed the letters with her pen, and a slight move of the lip accompanied every downstroke. There were two large antique rings on her forefinger, which the quill rubbed against in moving backwards and forwards, thereby causing a secondary noise rivalling the primary one of the nib upon the paper.

"Mamma," said the younger lady, "here I am at last."

A writer's mind in the midst of a sentence being like a ship at sea, knowing no rest or comfort till safely piloted into the harbour of a full stop, Lady Petherwin just replied with "What," in an occupied tone, not rising to interrogation. After signing her name to the letter, she raised her eyes.

"Why, how late you are, Ethelberta, and how heated you look!" she said. "I have been quite alarmed about you. What do you say has happened?"

The great, chief, and altogether eclipsing thing that had happened was the accidental meeting with an old lover whom she had once quarrelled with; and Ethelberta's honesty would have delivered the tidings at once, had not, unfortunately, all the rest of her attributes been dead against it for the old lady's sake even more than for her own.

"I saw a great cruel bird chasing a harmless duck!" she exclaimed, innocently. "And I ran after to see what the end of it would be—much further than I had any idea of going. However, the duck came to a

pond, and in running round it to see the end of the fight, I could not remember which way I had come."

"Mercy!" said her mother-in-law, lifting her large eyelids, heavy as window-shutters, and spreading out her fingers like the horns of a snail. "You might have sunk up to your knees and got lost in that swampy place—such a time of night, too. What a tomboy you are. And how did you find your way home after all?"

"Oh, some man showed me the way, and then I had no difficulty, and after that I came along leisurely."

"I thought you had been running all the way; you look so warm."

"It is a warm evening. . . . Yes, and I have been thinking of old times as I walked along," she said, "and how people's positions in life alter. Have I not heard you say that while I was at Bonn, at school, some family that we had known had their household broken up when the father died, and that the children went away you didn't know where?"

"Do you mean the Julianes?"

"Yes, that was the name."

"Why, of course you know it was the Julianes. Young Julian had a day or two's fancy for you one summer, had he not?—just after you came to us, at the same time, or just before it, that my poor boy and you were so desperately attached to each other."

"Oh yes, I recollect," said Ethelberta. "And he had a sister, I think. I wonder where they went to live after the family collapse."

"I do not know," said Lady Petherwin, taking up another sheet of paper. "I have a dim notion that the son, who had been brought up to no profession, became a teacher of music in some country-town—music having always been his hobby. But the facts are not very distinct in my memory." And she dipped her pen for another letter.

Ethelberta, with a rather fallen countenance, then left her mother-in-law, and went where all ladies are supposed to go when they want to torment their minds in comfort—to her own room. Here she thoughtfully sat down awhile, and some time later she rang for her maid.

"Menlove," she said, without looking towards a rustle and half a footstep that had just come in at the door, but leaning back in her chair and speaking towards the corner of the looking-glass, "will you go down and find out if any gentleman named Julian has been staying in this house? Get to know it, I mean, Menlove, not by directly inquiring; you have ways of getting to know things, have you not? If the devoted George were here now, he would help——"

"George was nothing to me, ma'am."

"James, then."

"And I only had James for a week or ten days: when I found he was a married man, I encouraged his addresses very little indeed."

"If you had encouraged him tooth and nail, you couldn't have fumed more at the loss of him. But please to go and make that inquiry, will you, Menlove?"

In a few minutes Ethelberta's woman was back again. "A gentleman of that name stayed here last night, and left this afternoon."

"Will you find out his address?"

Now the lady's-maid had already been quick-witted enough to find out that, and indeed all about him; but it chanced that a fashionable illustrated weekly paper had just been sent from the bookseller's, and being in want of a little time to look it over before it reached her mistress's hands, Mrs. Menlove retired, as if to go and ask the question—to stand meanwhile under the gas-lamp in the passage, inspecting the fascinating engravings. But as time will not wait for tiring-women, a natural length of absence soon elapsed, and she returned again and said,

"His address is, Upper Street, Sandbourne."

The hour grew later, and that dreamy period came round when ladies' fancies, that have lain shut up close as their fans during the day, begin to assert themselves anew. At this time a good guess at Ethelberta's thoughts might have been made from her manner of passing the minutes away. Instead of reading, entering notes in her diary, or doing any ordinary thing, she walked to and fro, curled her pretty nether lip within her pretty upper one a great many times, made a cradle of her locked fingers, and paused with fixed eyes where the walls of the room set limits upon her walk to look at nothing but a picture within her mind.

CHAPTER II.

CHRISTOPHER'S HOUSE—SANDBOURNE TOWN—SANDBOURNE MOOR.

DURING the wet autumn of the same year, the postman passed one morning as usual into a plain street that ran through the landward portion of Sandbourne, a coast town and watering-place, not many miles from Anglebury. He knocked at the door of a flat-faced white house, having two windows on each floor, so that the front altogether was like a large six-of-spades. The door was opened by a slight, thoughtful young man with his hat on, just then coming out, and there was put into his hands a book packet, addressed, "Christopher Julian, Esq."

Christopher took the package upstairs, opened it with curiosity, and discovered within a green volume of poems, by an anonymous author, the title-page bearing the inscription, "Metres by Me." The book was new, though it was cut, and it appeared to have been looked into. The young man, after turning it over and exclaiming, "Who the deuce sent this, I wonder!" laid it on the table and went his way, being in haste to fulfil his engagements for the day.

In the evening, on returning home from his occupations, he sat himself down easily to read the newly-arrived volume. The winds of this uncertain season were snarling in the chimneys, and drops of rain spat themselves into the fire, revealing plainly that the young man's room was not

far enough from the top of the house to admit of a twist in the flue, and revealing darkly a little more, if that social rule-of-three inverse, the higher in lodgings the lower in pocket, were applicable here. However, the aspect of the room, though homely, was cheerful, a somewhat contradictory group of furniture suggesting that the collection consisted of waifs and strays from a former home, large and long established, the grimy faces of the old articles exercising a curious and subduing effect on the bright faces of the new. An oval mirror of rococo workmanship, and a heavy cabinet-piano with a cornice like that of an Egyptian temple, adjoined a harmonium of yesterday, and a harp that was almost as new. Printed music of the last century, and manuscript music of the previous evening, was there in such quantity as to endanger the tidiness of a retreat which was indeed only saved from a chronic state of litter by a pair of hands that sometimes played, with the lightness of breezes, about the sewing-machine standing in a remote corner—if any corner could be called remote in a room so small.

Fire-lights and shades from the shaking flames struck in a butterfly flutter on the underparts of the mantel-shelf, and upon the reader's cheek as he sat. Presently, and all at once, a much greater intentness pervaded his face: he turned back again, and read anew the subject that had arrested his eyes. He was a man whose countenance varied with his mood, though it kept somewhat in the rear of that mood. He looked sad when he felt almost serene, and only serene when he felt quite cheerful. It is a habit people acquire who have had repressing experiences.

A faint smile and flush now lightened his face, and jumping up he opened the door and exclaimed, "Faith! will you come here for a moment?" There was a peculiarity in the tone and manner of the exclamation which it is impossible to define; but it would have led anybody experienced in such matters, who had heard it, to say instantly, and to say truly, "That man is a Lodger."

A prompt step was heard on the stairs, and the young person addressed as Faith entered the room. She was small in figure, and bore less in the form of her features than in their shades when changing from expression to expression the evidence that she was his sister.

"Faith—I want your opinion. But stop, read this first. He laid his finger upon a page in the book, and placed it in her hand.

The girl drew from her pocket a little green leather sheath, worn at the edges to whitey-brown, and out of that a pair of spectacles, unconsciously looking round the room for a moment as she did so, as if to ensure that no stranger saw her in the act of using them. Here a weakness was uncovered at once; it was a small, pretty, and natural one; indeed, as weaknesses go in the great world, it might almost have been called a commendable trait. She then began to read, without sitting down.

These "Metres by Me" formed a collection of soft and marvelously musical rhyme, of the nature known as the *vers de société*, interspersed among a series of playful defences, in the form of sonnets, of the

supposed strategy of womankind in flirtation, courtship, and marriage—teeming with ideas bright as mirrors and just as unsubstantial—the whole forming a brilliant argument to justify the ways of girls to men. This pervading characteristic of the mass was the means of forcing into notice, by the strangeness of the contrast, the single mournful poem that the book contained. It was placed at the very end, and under the title of “Cancelled Words,” formed a whimsical and rather touching love-lament, somewhat in the tone of some of Sir Thomas Wyatt’s poems. This was the piece which had arrested Christopher’s attention, and had been pointed out by him to his sister Faith.

“It is very touching,” she said, looking up.

“What do you think I suspect about it—that the poem is addressed to me! Do you remember, when father was alive and we were at Scarborough that season, about a governess who came there with a Lady Petherwin, a woman with a sickly little daughter and a grown-up son?”

“I never saw any of them. I think I remember your knowing something about a young man of that name.”

“Yes, that was the family. Well, the governess there was a very attractive woman, and somehow or other I got more interested in her than I ought to have done (this is necessary to the history), and we used to meet in romantic places—you know the tone and mood—moons and stars and that kind of thing. The end of it was, she jilted me and married the son.”

“You were anxious to get away from Scarborough.”

“That was chiefly the reason. Well, then, I decided to think no more of her, and I was helped to do it by the troubles that came upon us shortly afterwards; by a blessed arrangement one does not feel a sentimental grief at all when additional grief comes in the shape of practical misfortune. However, on the first afternoon of the little holiday I took for my walking tour last summer I came to Anglebury and stayed about the neighbourhood for a day or two to see what it was like, thinking we might settle there if this place failed us. The next evening I left, and walked across the heath to Stonford—that’s a village about five miles further on—so as to be that distance on my way for next morning; and while I was crossing the heath there I met this very woman. We talked a little, because we couldn’t help it—you may imagine the kind of talk it was—and parted as coolly as we had met. Now this strange book comes to me; and I have a strong conviction that she is the writer of it, for that poem sketches a similar scene—or rather suggests it; and the tone generally seems the kind of thing she would write—not that she was a sad woman, either.”

“She seems to be a warm-hearted impulsive woman, to judge from these tender verses.”

“People who print very warm words have sometimes very cold manners. I wonder if it is really her writing, and if she has sent it to me!”

"Would it not be a singular thing for a married woman to do? Though of course"—(she removed her spectacles as if they hindered her from thinking, and hid them under the time-piece till she should go on reading)—"of course poets have morals and manners of their own, and custom is no argument with them. I am sure I would not have sent it to a man for the world!"

"I do not see any absolute harm in her sending it. Perhaps she thinks that, since it is all over, we may as well die friends."

"If I were her husband I should have doubts about the dying. And 'all over' may not be so plain to other people as it is to you."

"Perhaps not. And when a man checks all a woman's finer sentiment towards him by marrying her, it is only natural that it should find a vent somewhere. However, she probably does not know of my downfall since father's death, I hardly think she would have cared to do it had she known that. (I am assuming that it is Ethelberta—Mrs. Petherwin—who sends it: of course I am not sure.) We must remember that when I knew her I was a gentleman at ease, who had not the least notion that I should have to work for a living, and not only so, but should have first to invent a profession to work at out of my old tastes."

"Kit, you have made two mistakes in your thoughts of that lady. Even though I don't know her, I can show you that. Now I'll tell you: the first is in thinking that a married lady would send the book with that poem in it without at any rate a slight doubt as to its propriety: the second is in supposing that, had she wished to do it, she would have given the thing up because of our misfortunes. With a true woman the second reason would have had no effect had she once got over the first. I'm a woman, and that's why I know."

Christopher said nothing, and turned over the poems.

The next morning, before starting on his rounds to give the lessons in music by which he now lived, and, in comparison with starving, thrived, Christopher looked at the number on the obliterated stamp which had brought the book, and told his sister that he was going to discover by that means where the sender lived, and by degrees get a clue to the author, if possible.

"Wait a moment," said Faith, a faint unreasoned misgiving showing itself in her contemplative eyes. "Is it worth while? I cannot catch my sensations on the matter all at once—but is it worth doing? Yes, go: you will find out the town she lives in, and that may be interesting—it makes an event for us."

So Christopher left the house and called at the post-office, where, without speaking to any one, he looked at the *Guide* lying on the counter, and found to his surprise that the number belonged to the town he was in, which implied that the book was posted by a hand close by. By a natural chain of reasoning he was led to direct his steps thence to the bookseller's and ask a question.

"No copy of the book has been sold by me," the bookseller's voice replied from far up the Alpine height of the shop-ladder, where he stood dusting stale volumes, as was his habit of a morning before customers came. "I have never heard of it—probably never shall;" and he shook out the duster, so as to hit the delicate mean between stifling Christopher and not stifling him.

"Surely you don't live by your shop?" said Christopher, drawing back.

The bookseller's eyes rested on the speaker's; his face changed; he came down and placed his hand on the lapel of Christopher's coat. "Sir," he said, "country bookselling is a miserable, impoverishing, exasperating thing in these days. Can you understand the rest?"

"I can; I forgive a starving man anything," said Christopher.

"You go a long way very suddenly," said the bookseller. "Half as much pity would have pleased me better. However, wait a moment. He looked into a list of new books, and added: "The work you allude to was only published last week, though, mind you, if it had been published last century I might not have sold a copy."

Although his time was precious, Christopher had now become so interested in the circumstance that the unseen sender was somebody breathing his own atmosphere, possibly the very writer herself—the book being too new to be known—that he again passed through the blue shadow of the spire which stretched across the street to-day, and returned towards the post-office, animated by a bright intention—to ask the postmaster if he knew the handwriting in which the packet was addressed.

Now the postmaster was an acquaintance of Christopher's, but, as regarded putting that question to him, there was a difficulty. Everything turned upon whether the postmaster at the moment of asking would be in his under-government manner, or in the manner with which mere nature had endowed him. In the latter case his reply would be all that could be wished; in the former, one might as well put one's tongue into a mousetrap as make an inquiry so obviously outside the pale of legality as was this. He drew near, and heard the dull noise of blows proceeding from the interior—pitiless persevering of thumps in rapid succession—as if postmaster and men were one and all engaged in the pastime of pommeling one another unmercifully. Christopher at once recollected: they were making up a mail; and it settled the point as to calling. If anybody wished to see how ordinary hauteur could become positive ferocity it was necessary to do just one thing: put his head into the post-office and ask a question when they were occupying themselves in making up a mail.

So he postponed this business for the present, and refrained from entering till he passed by after dinner, when pleasant malt liquor, of that capacity for cheering which is expressed by four large letter X's marching in a row, had refilled the globular trunk of the postmaster and neutralized some of the effects of officialty. The time was well chosen, but the in-

quity threatened to prove fruitless : the postmaster had never, to his knowledge, seen the writing before. Christopher was turning away when a clerk in the background looked up and stated that some young lady brought a packet with such an address upon it into the office two days earlier to get it stamped.

"Do you know her?" said Christopher.

The clerk had not been there long, and he answered the question : "I have seen her about the neighbourhood. She goes by every morning ; I think she comes into the town from beyond the common, and returns again between four and five in the afternoon."

"What does she wear?"

"A white wool jacket with zigzags of black braid."

Christopher left the post-office and went his way. He hardly seemed inclined to push his inquiries with much vigour, till after a discussion in the evening with Faith, in which she entirely agreed with him in thinking that neither author nor sender, whether different persons or one and the same, was likely to be Ethelberta. This, by a natural feeling of opposition, led him to resolve that he would at any rate just cast eyes upon the stranger. Among his other pupils there were two who lived some distance out of Sandbourne—one of them in the direction indicated as that habitually taken by the young person ; and in the afternoon, as he returned homeward, Christopher loitered and looked around. He could see nobody. After giving up the attempt, and when about a mile from the outskirts of the town, he discerned a light spot ahead of him, which actually turned out to be the jacket alluded to. In due time he met the wearer face to face ; she was not Ethelberta Petherwin—quite a different sort of individual. He had long made up his mind that this would be the case, yet he was in some indescribable way disappointed.

Of the two classes into which gentle young women naturally divide, those who grow red at their weddings, and those who grow pale, the present one belonged to the former class. She was an April-natured, pink-cheeked girl with eyes that would have made any jeweller in England think of his trade—one who evidently took her day in the daytime, frequently caught the early worm, and had little to do with yawns or candle-light. She came and passed him ; he fancied that her countenance changed. But one may fancy anything, and the pair receded each from each without turning their heads. He could not speak to her, plain and simple as she seemed.

It is rarely that a man who can be entered and made to throb by the channel of his ears, is not open to a similar attack through the channel of his eyes—for many doors will admit to one mansion—allowance being made for the readier capacity of chosen and practised organs. Hence the beauties, concords, and eloquences of the female form were never without their effect upon Christopher, a born musician, artist, poet, seer, mouthpiece—whichever a translator of Nature's oracles into the vulgar tongue may be called. The young girl who had gone by was fresh

and pleasant ; moreover, she was a sort of mysterious link between himself and the past, which these things were vividly reviving in him. He had for some time intended to fix his lessons out of town at a somewhat later hour than hitherto, and he now found that this alteration might lead to a meeting with her every lesson-day, when perhaps, if he wished, an opportunity might occur of making her acquaintance. The contemplated change of time was carried out the following week, and at once Christopher met her again. She had not much dignity, he had not much reserve, and the sudden resolution to have a holiday which sometimes impels a plump heart to rise up against a brain that overweights it was not to be resisted. He just lifted his hat, and put the only question he could think of as a beginning : " Have I the pleasure of addressing the author of a book of very melodious poems that was sent me the other day ? "

The girl's forefinger twirled rapidly the loop of braid that it had previously been twirling slowly, and drawing in her breath she said, " No, sir."

" The sender then ? "

" Yes."

She somehow presented herself as so insignificant by the combined effect of the manner and the words that Christopher lowered his method of address to her level at once. " Ah," he said, " such an atmosphere as the writer of *Metres by Me* seems to breathe would soon spoil cheeks that are fresh and round as lady-apples—eh, little girl ? But are you disposed to tell me that writer's name ? "

By applying a general idea to a particular case a person with the best of intentions may find himself immediately landed in a quandary. In saying to the country girl before him what would have suited the mass of country lasses well enough, Christopher had offended her beyond the cure of compliment. The expression about lady-apples and little girl was not the kind of thing she cared for.

" I am not disposed to tell the writer's name," she replied, with a dudgeon that was very great for one whose whole stock of it was a trifle. And she passed on and left him standing alone.

Thus further conversation was checked ; but perhaps that very flaw in his proceedings for approaching her was what led Christopher to adhere to the re-arranged hours of his lesson ; he met her the next Wednesday, and the next Friday, and throughout the following week—no further words passing between them. For a while she went by very demurely, apparently mindful of his offence. But effrontery is not proved to be part of a man's nature till he has been guilty of a second act : the best of men may commit a first through accident or ignorance—may even be betrayed into it by over-zeal for experiment. Some such conclusion may or may not have been arrived at by the girl with the lady-apple cheeks ; at any rate, after the lapse of another week a new spectacle presented itself ; her redness deepened whenever Christopher passed her by, and embarrassment pervaded her from the lowest stitch to the tip of her feather. She had little chance of escaping him by diverging from the road, for a figure

quity threatened to prove fruitless: the postmaster had never, to his knowledge, seen the writing before. Christopher was turning away when a clerk in the background looked up and stated that some young lady brought a packet with such an address upon it into the office two days earlier to get it stamped.

"Do you know her?" said Christopher.

The clerk had not been there long, and he answered the question: "I have seen her about the neighbourhood. She goes by every morning; I think she comes into the town from beyond the common, and returns again between four and five in the afternoon."

"What does she wear?"

"A white wool jacket with zigzags of black braid."

Christopher left the post-office and went his way. He hardly seemed inclined to push his inquiries with much vigour, till after a discussion in the evening with Faith, in which she entirely agreed with him in thinking that neither author nor sender, whether different persons or one and the same, was likely to be Ethelberta. This, by a natural feeling of opposition, led him to resolve that he would at any rate just cast eyes upon the stranger. Among his other pupils there were two who lived some distance out of Sandbourne—one of them in the direction indicated as that habitually taken by the young person; and in the afternoon, as he returned homeward, Christopher loitered and looked around. He could see nobody. After giving up the attempt, and when about a mile from the outskirts of the town, he discerned a light spot ahead of him, which actually turned out to be the jacket alluded to. In due time he met the wearer face to face; she was not Ethelberta Petherwin—quite a different sort of individual. He had long made up his mind that this would be the case, yet he was in some indescribable way disappointed.

Of the two classes into which gentle young women naturally divide, those who grow red at their weddings, and those who grow pale, the present one belonged to the former class. She was an April-natured, pink-cheeked girl with eyes that would have made any jeweller in England think of his trade—one who evidently took her day in the daytime, frequently caught the early worm, and had little to do with yawns or candle-light. She came and passed him; he fancied that her countenance changed. But one may fancy anything, and the pair receded each from each without turning their heads. He could not speak to her, plain and simple as she seemed.

It is rarely that a man who can be entered and made to throb by the channel of his ears, is not open to a similar attack through the channel of his eyes—for many doors will admit to one mansion—allowance being made for the readier capacity of chosen and practised organs. Hence the beauties, concords, and eloquences of the female form were never without their effect upon Christopher, a born musician, artist, poet, seer, mouthpiece—whichever a translator of Nature's oracles into the vulgar tongue may be called. The young girl who had gone by was fresh

and pleasant; moreover, she was a sort of mysterious link between himself and the past, which these things were vividly reviving in him. He had for some time intended to fix his lessons out of town at a somewhat later hour than hitherto, and he now found that this alteration might lead to a meeting with her every lesson-day, when perhaps, if he wished, an opportunity might occur of making her acquaintance. The contemplated change of time was carried out the following week, and at once Christopher met her again. She had not much dignity, he had not much reserve, and the sudden resolution to have a holiday which sometimes impels a plump heart to rise up against a brain that overweights it was not to be resisted. He just lifted his hat, and put the only question he could think of as a beginning: "Have I the pleasure of addressing the author of a book of very melodious poems that was sent me the other day?"

The girl's forefinger twirled rapidly the loop of braid that it had previously been twirling slowly, and drawing in her breath she said, "No, sir."

"The sender then?"

"Yes."

She somehow presented herself as so insignificant by the combined effect of the manner and the words that Christopher lowered his method of address to her level at once. "Ah," he said, "such an atmosphere as the writer of *Metres by Me* seems to breathe would soon spoil cheeks that are fresh and round as lady-apples—eh, little girl? But are you disposed to tell me that writer's name?"

By applying a general idea to a particular case a person with the best of intentions may find himself immediately landed in a quandary. In saying to the country girl before him what would have suited the mass of country lasses well enough, Christopher had offended her beyond the cure of compliment. The expression about lady-apples and little girl was not the kind of thing she cared for.

"I am not disposed to tell the writer's name," she replied, with a dudgeon that was very great for one whose whole stock of it was a trifle. And she passed on and left him standing alone.

Thus further conversation was checked; but perhaps that very flaw in his proceedings for approaching her was what led Christopher to adhere to the re-arranged hours of his lesson; he met her the next Wednesday, and the next Friday, and throughout the following week—no further words passing between them. For a while she went by very demurely, apparently mindful of his offence. But effrontery is not proved to be part of a man's nature till he has been guilty of a second act: the best of men may commit a first through accident or ignorance—may even be betrayed into it by over-zeal for experiment. Some such conclusion may or may not have been arrived at by the girl with the lady-apple cheeks; at any rate, after the lapse of another week a new spectacle presented itself; her redness deepened whenever Christopher passed her by, and embarrassment pervaded her from the lowest stitch to the tip of her feather. She had little chance of escaping him by diverging from the road, for a figure

could be seen across the open ground to the distance of half a mile on either side. One day as he drew near as usual, she met him as women meet a cloud of dust—she turned and advanced backwards till he had passed.

This would have been disconcerting but for one reason: Christopher was ceasing to notice her. He was a man who often when walking abroad, and looking as it were at the scene before his eyes, discerned successes and failures, friends and relations, episodes of childhood, wedding feasts and funerals, the landscape suffering greatly by these visions, until it became no more than the patterned wall-tints about the paintings in a gallery; something necessary to the tone and mood, yet not regarded. Nothing but a special concentration of himself on externals could interrupt this habit, and now that her appearance along the way had changed from a chance to a custom he began to lapse again into the old trick. He gazed once or twice at her form without seeing it: she met him the next afternoon with a parasol over her face, completely screening it from observation. He did not notice that the parasol trembled.

The highly ingenious and womanly device of the parasol had prevailed a few days, when a boy who tended the cows browsing in scores about the meadows asked Christopher the time of day, and afterwards stood regarding him with an arrangement of face in which the eyes dwindled very narrow, and gave up their place as the most noticeable features of the countenance to the upper and lower rows of teeth.

"Well, what makes you merry?" said Christopher.

"Hee-hee-hee, Sir!—that young woman you meets with the little umbrella!"

"What about her?" Christopher sharply asked.

"Why, Sir, she've got a little small hole in her umbrella, and when you think she don't see ye a morsel, she's eyeing ye all the time through the little small hole, hee-hee-hee!"

Christopher went on thinking how oddly he had got mixed up with this insignificant woman. Discretion required more than ever that he should act as if there were no such being within his horizon. And as he could not conveniently alter the time of his return home, he made it a point to read, with painful intentness, from some book every day on his walk, for it taxed his dignity of gaze a little to meet a woman who was reduced to the condition of timorously watching him like a mouse in a hole—childish as the trick was. Thus book in hand he regularly approached her now, and could discern whenever he chose, over the margin of the page which he was supposed to be concentrated upon, the hem of her garment, or the tip of her toe slipping past; but he never looked up from his book while the moor contained her. This went on till six weeks had passed from the time of their first encounter. Latterly might have been once or twice heard, when he had moved out of earshot, a sound like a small gasping sigh; but no arrangements were disturbed, and Christopher continued to keep down his eyes as persistently as a saint in a church window.

The last day of his engagement had arrived, and with it the last of his walks that way. On his final return he carried in his hand a bunch of flowers which had been presented to him at the country-house where his lessons were given. He was taking them home to his sister Faith, who prized the lingering blossoms of the seeding season. Soon appeared as usual his fellow-traveller; whereupon Christopher looked down upon his nosegay. "Sweet simple girl," he thought, "I'll endeavour to make peace with her by means of these flowers before we part for good." When she came up he held them out to her and said, "Will you allow me to present you with these?" The bright colours of the nosegay instantly attracted the girl's hand—perhaps before there had been time for thought to thoroughly construe the position; for it happened that when her arm was stretched into the air she steadied it quickly, and stood with the pose of a statue—rigid with uncertainty. But it was too late to refuse: Christopher had put the nosegay within her fingers. Whatever pleasant expression of thanks may have appeared in her eyes fell only on the bunch of flowers, for during the whole transaction they reached to no higher level than that. To say that he was coming no more seemed scarcely necessary under the circumstances, and wishing her 'Good-afternoon' very heartily, he passed on. He had learnt by this time of her occupation, which was that of pupil-teacher at one of the schools in the town, whither she walked daily from a village near. If he had not been poor and the little teacher humble, Christopher might possibly have been tempted to inquire more briskly about her; and who knows how such a pursuit might have ended? But hard externals rule volatile sentiment, and under these untoward influences the girl and the book and the truth about its author were matters upon which he could not afford to expend much time. All Christopher did was think now and then of the pretty innocent face and round deep eyes, not once wondering if the mind which enlivened them ever thought of him.

CHAPTER III.

SANDBOURNE MOOR—(continued.)

It was one of those hostile days of the year when chatterbox ladies remain miserably in their homes to save the carriage and harness, when clerks' wives hate living in lodgings, when vehicles and people appear in the street with duplicates of themselves underfoot, when bricklayers, slaters, and other out-door journeymen sit in a shed and drink beer, when ducks and drakes play with hilarious delight at their own family game, or spread out one wing after another in the slower enjoyment of letting the delicious moisture penetrate to their innermost down. The smoke from the flues of Sandbourne had barely strength enough to emerge into the drizzling rain, hanging down the sides of each chimney-pot like the streamer of a becalmed ship; and a troop of mice might have rattled

down the pipes from roof to basement with less noise than did the water that day.

On the broad moor to landward of the town, where Christopher's meetings with the teacher had so regularly occurred, were a stream and some large pools; and beside one of these, near some hatches and a weir, stood a little square building, not much larger inside than the Lord Mayor's coach. It was known simply as "The Weir House." On this wet afternoon, which was the one following the day of Christopher's last lesson over the plain, a nearly invisible smoke came from the puny chimney of the hut. Though the door was closed, sounds of chatting and mirth fizzed from the interior, and would have told anybody who had come near—which nobody did—that the usually empty shell was tenanted to-day.

The scene within was a large fire in a fireplace to which the whole floor of the house was no more than a hearthstone. The occupants were two gentlemanly persons, in shooting costume, who had been traversing the moor for miles in search of wild duck and teal, a waterman, and a small spaniel. In the corner stood their guns, and two or three wild mallards, which represented the scanty product of their morning's labour, the iridescent necks of the dead birds replying to every flicker of the fire. The two sportsmen were smoking, and their man was mostly occupying himself in poking and stirring the fire with a stick: all three appeared to be pretty well wetted.

One of the gentlemen, by way of varying the not very exhilarating study of four brick walls within microscopic distance of his eye, turned to the small square hole which admitted light and air to the hut, and looked out upon the dreary prospect before him. The wide concave of cloud, of the monotonous hue of dull pewter, formed an unbroken hood over the level from horizon to horizon; beneath it, reflecting its wan lustre, the glazed high-road which bisected the moor stretched, hedgeless and ditchless, past a directing-post where another road joined it, and on to the less regular ground beyond, lying like a riband unrolled across the scene, till it vanished over the furthestmost undulation. Beside the pools were occasional tall sheaves of flags and sedge, and about the plain a few bushes, these forming the only obstructions near at hand to a view otherwise unbroken.

The sportsman's attention was attracted by a figure in a state of gradual enlargement as it approached along the road.

"I should think that if pleasure can't tempt a native out of doors to-day, business will never force him out," he observed. "There is, for the first time, somebody coming along the road."

"If business don't drag him out pleasure'll never tempt en, is more like our nater in these parts, sir," said the man, who was looking into the fire.

The conversation showed no vitality, and down it dropped dead as before, the man who was standing up continuing to gaze into the moisture. What had at first appeared as an epicene shape the decreasing

space resolved into a cloaked female under an umbrella : she now relaxed her pace, till, reaching the directing-post where the road branched into two, she paused and looked about her. Instead of coming further she slowly retraced her steps for about a hundred yards, and partially hid herself among some stunted thorns.

"That's an appointment," said the first speaker, as he removed the cigar from his lips; "and by the lords, what a day and place for an appointment with a woman!"

"What's an appointment?" inquired his friend, a town young man, with a Tussaud complexion and well-pencilled brows half way up his forehead, so that his upper eyelids appeared to possess the uncommon quality of tallness.

"Look out here, and you'll see. By that directing-post, where the two roads meet. As a man devoted to art, Ladywell, who has had the honour of being hung higher up on the Academy walls than any other living painter, you should take out your sketch-book and dash off the scene."

Where nothing particular is going on, one incident makes a drama; and interested in that proportion, the art-sportsman put up his eyeglass (a form he adhered to before firing at game that had risen, by which merciful arrangement the bird got safe off), placed his face beside his companion's, and also peered through the opening. The young pupil-teacher—for she was the object of their scrutiny—re-approached the spot whereon she had been accustomed for the last many weeks of her journey home to meet Christopher, now for the first time missing, and again she seemed reluctant to pass the hand-post, for that marked the point where the chance of seeing him ended. She glided backwards as before, this time keeping her face still to the front, as if trying to persuade the world at large, and her own shamefacedness, that she had not yet approached the place at all.

"Query, how long will she wait for him (for it is a him to a certainty)?" resumed the elder of the smokers, at the end of several minutes of silence, when, full of vacillation and doubt, she became lost to view behind some bushes. "Will she reappear? tell me, gentles." The smoking went on, and up she came into open ground as before, and walked lingeringly by.

"I wonder who the girl is, to come to such a place as that in this weather? There she is again," said the young man called Ladywell.

"Some cottage lass, not yet old enough to make the most of the value set on her by her follower, small as that appears to be. Now we may get an idea of the hour named by the fellow for the appointment, for depend upon it, the time when she first came—about five minutes ago—was the time he should have been there. It is now getting on towards five—half-past four was doubtless the time named."

"She's not come o'purpose: 'tis her way home, from school every day," said the waterman.

"An experiment on woman's endurance and patience under neglect. Two to one against her staying a quarter of an hour."

"The same odds against her not staying till five would be nearer probability. What's half an hour to a girl in love?"

"On a moorland in wet weather it is thirty perceptible minutes to any fireside man, woman, or beast in Christendom—minutes that can be felt, like the Egyptian plague of darkness. Now, little girl, go home: he is not worth it."

Twenty minutes passed, and the girl returned miserably to the hand-post, still to wander back to her retreat behind the sedge, and lead any chance comer from the opposite quarter to believe that she had not yet reached this ultimate point beyond which a meeting with Christopher was impossible.

"Now you'll find that she means to wait the complete half hour, and then off she goes with a broken heart."

All three now looked through the hole to test the truth of the prognostication. The hour of five completed itself on their watches; the girl again came forward. And then the three in ambuscade could see her pull out her handkerchief, and place it to her eyes.

"She's grieving now because he has not come. Poor little woman, what a brute he must be; for a broken heart in a woman means a broken vow in a man, as I infer from a thousand instances in experience, romance, and history. Don't open the door till she is gone, Ladywell; it will only disturb her."

As they had guessed, the pupil-teacher, hearing the distant town-clock strike the hour, gave way to her fancy no longer, and launched into the diverging path. This lingering for Christopher's arrival had, as is known, been founded on nothing more of the nature of an assignation than lay in his regular walk along the plain at that time every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of the six previous weeks. It must be said that he was very far indeed from divining that his injudicious peace-offering of the flowers had stirred into life such a wearing, anxious, hopeful, despairing solicitude as this, which had been latent for some time during his constant meetings with the little stranger.

She vanished in the mist towards the left, and the loiterers in the hut began to move and open the door, remarking, "Now then for Wyndway House, a change of clothes, and a dinner."

CHAPTER IV.

SANDEOURNE PIER—ROAD TO WYNDWAY—BALL-ROOM IN

WYNDWAY HOUSE.

THE last light of a winter day had gone down behind the houses of Sandbourne, and night was shut close over all. Christopher, about eight o'clock, was standing at the end of the pier with his back towards the open sea, from whence the waves were pushing to the shore in frills and

hollows that were just rendered visible in all their bleak instability by the row of lights along the sides of the jetty, the rapid motion landward of the wave-tips producing upon his eye an apparent progress of the pier out to sea. Before him extended the lamp-lit watering-place itself, the thousand specks of flame with which it was tricked out enlarging in long perspective from points far right and left to a full throng in the centre of the picture, like two opposing rockets with their sparks transfixed. This pier-head was a spot which Christopher enjoyed visiting on such moaning and sighing nights as the present, when the sportive and variegated throng that haunted the pier on autumn days was no longer there, and he seemed alone with weather and the invincible sea.

Somebody came towards him along the deserted footway, and rays from the nearest lamp streaked the face of his sister Faith.

"Oh, Christopher, I knew you were here," she said eagerly. "You are wanted; there's a servant come from Wyndway House after you. He is sent to ask if you can come immediately to play at a little dance they have resolved upon this evening—quite suddenly it seems. If you can come, you must bring with you any assistant you can lay your hands upon at a moment's notice, he says."

"Wyndway House; why on earth should the people send for me above all other musicians in the town?"

Faith did not know. "If you really decide to go," she said, as they walked homeward, "you might take me as your assistant. I should answer the purpose, should I not, Kit? since it is only a dance or two they seem to want."

"And your harp I suppose you mean? Oh yes; you will be quite competent to do that. It cannot be a regular ball; they would have had the quadrille band for anything of that sort. Faith—we'll go. However, let us see the man first, and inquire particulars."

Reaching home, Christopher found at his door a horse and waggonette in charge of a man-servant in livery, who repeated what Faith had told her brother. Wyndway House was a well-known country seat three or four miles out of the town, and the coachman mentioned that if they were going it would be well that they should get ready to start as soon as they conveniently could, since he had been told to return by ten if possible. Christopher quickly prepared himself and put a new string or two into Faith's harp, by which time she also was dressed; and wrapping up herself and her instrument safe from the night air, away they drove at half-past nine.

"Is it a large party?" said Christopher, as they whizzed along.

"No, sir; it is what we call a dance—that is, 'tis like a ball, you know, on a small scale—a ball of impulse that you never thought of till you had it. In short, it grew out of a talk at dinner, I believe; and some of the young people present wanted a jig, and didn't care to play themselves, you know, young ladies being an idle class of society at the best of times. We've a house full of sleeping company, you understand

—been there a week some of 'em—most of 'em being mistress's relations."

"They probably found it a little dull."

"Well, yes—it is rather dull for 'em—Christmas-time and all. As soon as it was proposed they were all wild for sending post-haste for somebody or other to play to them."

"Did they name me particularly?" said Christopher.

"Yes; 'Mr. Christopher Julian,' she says. 'The gent who's turned music-man?' I said. 'Yes, that's him,' says she."

"There were music-men living nearer to your end of the town than I."

"Yes, but I know it was you particular: though I don't think mistress thought anything about you at first. Mr. Joyce—that's the butler—he says your name was mentioned to our old party, when he was in the room, by a young lady staying with us, and mistress says then 'The Julians have had a downfall, and the son has took to music.' Then when dancing was talked of, they said, 'Oh let's have him by all means.'"

"Was the young lady who first inquired for my family the same one who said, 'Let's have him by all means?'"

"Oh no; but it was on account of her asking that the rest said they would like you to play—leastwise that's as I had it from Joyce."

"Do you know that lady's name?"

"Mrs. Petherwin."

"Ah!"

"Cold, sir?"

"Oh no."

"Bad corn perhaps?—they shoots terribly at change of weather."

"They do."

Christopher did not like to question the man any further, though what he had heard added new life to his previous curiosity; and they drove along the way in silence, Faith's figure, wrapped up to the top of her head, cutting into the sky behind them like a sugar-loaf, and the summit of the harp, wrapped up in the same way, like another. Such gates as occurred on the roads had been left open by the forethought of the coachman, and passing the lodge they proceeded about half a mile along a private drive, then ascended a rise, and came in view of the front of the mansion, punctured with windows that were now mostly lighted up. Round the lamp in the porch of the carriage-entrance a bat was wheeling and enjoying itself alone, appearing at intervals in the illuminated air and vanishing again into outer shades.

"What is that?" said Faith, catching a glimpse of something that the carriage-lamp showed on the face of one wall as they passed, a marble bas-relief of some battle-piece, built into the stonework.

"That's the scene of the death of one of the squire's forefathers—Colonel Sir Martin Jones, who was killed at the moment of victory in the battle of Salamanca—but I haven't been here long enough to know the rights o't. When I am in one of my meditations, as I wait here with the

carriage sometimes, I think, how many more get killed at the moment of victory than at the moment of defeat—'tis one of the contradictions of nature. This is the entrance for you, sir." And he turned the corner and pulled up before a side door.

They alighted and went in, Christopher shouldering Faith's harp, and she marching modestly behind, with curly-eared music-books under her arm. They were shown into the house-steward's room, and ushered thence along a badly-lit passage and past a door within which a hum and laughter were audible. The door next to this was then opened for them, and they entered.

Scarcely had Faith, or Christopher either, beheld a more shining scene than was presented by the saloon in which they now found themselves. Coming direct from the gloomy park, and led to the room by that back passage from the servants' quarter, the light from the chandelier and branches against the walls, striking on gildings at all points, quite dazzled their sight for a minute or two: it caused Faith to move forward with her eyes on the floor, and filled Christopher with an impulse to turn back again into some dusky corner where every thread of his not over-new dress suit—rather moth-eaten through lack of feasts for airing it at—could not be counted so easily.

He was soon seated before a grand-piano, and Faith sat down under the shadow of her harp, both being arranged on a dais within an alcove at one end of the room. A screen of ivy and holly had been constructed across the front of this recess for the games of the children on Christmas Eve, and it still remained there, a small creep-hole being left for entrance and exit.

Then the merry guests tumbled through doors at the further end, and dancing began, the mingling of black-coated men and bright ladies giving a charming appearance to the groups as seen by Faith and her brother, the whole spectacle deriving an unexpected novelty from the accident of reaching their eyes through interstices in the tracery of green leaves, which added to the picture a softness that it would not otherwise have possessed. On the other hand, the musicians, having a much weaker light, could hardly be discerned by the performers in the dance.

The music was now rattling on, and the ladies in their foam-like dresses were busily threading and spinning about the floor, when Faith, casually looking up into her brother's face, was surprised to see that a change had come over it. At the end of the quadrille he leant across to her before she had time to speak, and said quietly, "She's here!"

"Who?" said Faith, for she had not heard the words of the coachman.

"Ethelberta."

"Then it was she who wrote the book?"

"It seems that it must have been."

VOL. XXXII.—NO. 187.

"Which is she?" asked Faith, peeping through with the keenest interest.

"The one who has the skirts of her dress looped up with convolvulus flowers,—the one with her hair fastened in a sort of Venus knot behind; she has just been dancing with that perfumed piece of a man they call Mr. Ladywell—it is he with the high eyebrows arched like a girl's." He added with a wrinkled smile, "I cannot for my life see anybody answering to the character of husband to her, for every man takes notice of her."

They were interrupted by another dance being called for, and then, his fingers tapping about upon the keys as mechanically as fowls pecking at barley-corns, Christopher gave himself up with a curious and far from unalloyed pleasure to the occupation of watching Ethelberta, now again crossing the field of his vision like a returned comet whose characteristics were fast becoming purely historical. She was a plump-armed creature, with a white round neck as firm as a fort—altogether a vigorous shape, as refreshing to the eye as the green leaves through which he beheld her. She danced freely, and with a zest that was apparently irrespective of partners. He had been waiting long to hear her speak, and when at length her voice did reach him, it was the revelation of a strange matter to find how great a thing that small event had become to him. He knew the old utterance—rapid but not frequent, an obstructive thought causing sometimes a sudden halt in the midst of a stream of words. But the feature by which a cool observer would have singled her out from others in his memory when asking himself what she was like was that of a peculiar gaze into imaginary far-away distance when making a quiet remark to a partner—not with contracted eyes like a seafaring man, but with an open full look—a remark in which little words in a low tone were made to express a great deal, as several single gentlemen afterwards found.

The production of dance-music when the criticising stage among the dancers has passed, and they have grown full of excitement and animal spirits, does not require much concentration of thought in the producers thereof; and desultory conversation accordingly went on between Faith and her brother from time to time.

"Kit," she said on one occasion, "are you looking at the way in which the flowers are fastened to the leaves?—taking a mean advantage of being at the back of the tapestry? You cannot think how you stare at them."

"I was looking through them—certainly not at them. Faith, I have a feeling of being moved about like a puppet in the hands of a person who legally can be nothing to me; and I cannot make up my mind whether I like it or not."

"Your mover being that charming woman with the shining bunch of hair and convolvuluses."

"Yes: it is through her that we are brought here, and through her writing that poem, 'Cancelled Words,' that the book was sent me, and

through the accidental renewal of acquaintance between us on Anglebury Heath, that she wrote the poem. I was, however, at the moment you spoke, thinking more particularly of the little teacher whom Ethelberta must have commissioned to send the book to me; and why that girl was chosen to do it."

"There may be a hundred reasons. Kit, I have never yet seen her look once this way."

Christopher had certainly not yet received look or gesture from her; but his time came. It was while he was for a moment outside the recess, and he caught her in the act. She became slightly confused, turned aside, and entered into conversation with a neighbour.

It was only a look, and yet what it was! One may say of a look that it is capable of division into as many families, species, tribes, orders, and classes, as the animal world itself; that it rules schools and parliaments; is the recognised medium of matrimonial language in public, of pre-matrimonial language in private, of honeymoon language in public and private both—and is but a little thing after all. Christopher saw Ethelberta Petherwin's look—the well-known spark of light upon the well-known depths of dark—and felt something going out of him which had gone out of him once before: he could not tell what the end of it would be.

Thus continually beholding her and her companions in the giddy whirl, the night wore on with the musicians, last dances and more last dances being added, till the intentions of the old on the matter were thrice exceeded in the interests of the young. Watching the couples whirl and turn, advance and recede as gently as spirits, knot themselves like house-flies and part again, and lullabied by the faint regular beat of their footsteps to the tune, the players sank into the peculiar mesmeric quiet which comes over impressible people who play for a great length of time in the midst of dancers; and at last the only sounds that Christopher took cognizance of were those of the exceptional kind, breaking above the general sea of sound—a casual smart rustle of silk, a laugh, a stumble, the monosyllabic talk of those who happened to linger for a moment close to the leafy screen—all coming to his ears like voices from those old times when he had mingled in similar scenes, not as servant but as guest.

A Last Look.

THEY say the years since last we met
 Have wrought sad change in thee;
 That it were better to forget
 Our youth's fond history.
 And yet I fain would clasp that hand,
 Would meet those eyes once more,
 One moment by thy side would stand,
 As I have stood of yore.

They say the very tones that thrill'd
 My heart, and dimm'd my eyes,
 Now, by the cold world's blighting chill'd,
 I scarce might recognise.
 And yet I long to hear thee speak,
 Repeat some bygone strain,
 Although the charm I there should seek
 Were listen'd for in vain.

I would not wish the years roll'd back,
 Could such a choice be mine,
 Nor falter in the onward track,
 Though sever'd far from thine.
 But pilgrims may from hard-won heights
 Receding homes survey,
 And give a sigh to past delights,
 Yet, sighing—turn away.

G. W.

Frederick Walker, I.R.A.

IN MEMORIAM.

HALF a dozen years ago, we had two painters whose pictures many of us used to look for first of all in the exhibitions, and dwell upon with most delight. Each of them in his way seemed to have brought new life into the English school. Each of them used to show us simple matters, painted with all truth and sincerity, and yet lighted up with one knew not what radiance, what rare and exquisite spirit of dignity and pathos. One of the two was by many years the elder. He had not been educated for an artist, but the soul of art was in him. He had painted first at Rome, and had come back, his mind's eye filled with the colours, looks, attitudes, of the South, to his native English midlands, and had recognised in them a kindred beauty, that beauty of the North which is not less real though it is more withdrawn, less obvious and frank for art to woo, than the beauty of the South. He wrought, in the face of neglect and illness, until he had revealed to us the unsuspected charm and nobleness of many a daily sight, and called out a hundred mellow harmonies from common things. The other and younger of the two had been trained and encouraged in the pursuit of art from his boyhood, and when he began to make his mark was almost a boy still. First he made designs for stories, to be engraved in books and periodicals. Next he used to exhibit drawings in water-colour, sometimes of new subjects, more commonly carrying out one or another of those book designs with a delicate perfection of life and grace we had hardly been aware of in the woodcut. Then, beginning about nine years ago, came a series of paintings in oil at the Royal Academy Exhibitions. There was that figure of a forlorn mother with her baby, who had lost her way in the snow. There was the long group of boys bathing and drying themselves among the broken light and ripples and meadow grasses of a sunny riverside in summer time. There was the gipsy family in a brown hollow of the heath under a brown sky,—the smoke wreathing up from the fire of sticks, the crouching woman and baby, the old man and boy, the tall scowling daughter in yellow, looking like some wild thing with her noble shape and rebellious glance. There was the gate of the impoverished Somersetshire manor-house, the neglected stone steps and armorial pillars, the figure of the high-bred widow coming out in her worn mourning, the stout country-girl who has held the gate respectfully open for her, the village children lolling on the steps, who as the lady comes out turn a little shyly in their play, the labourer, with his boy and dog, who carries his spade on his shoulder, and half pauses in his walk and takes his pipe from his mouth with an unconscious instinct of deference. There was the ploughman driving his plough through the rich loam of a sunken field after spring rain—the mighty frame and generous action of the great plough-horses, the water-brook brimmed and racing past the

A Last Look.

THEY say the years since last we met
 Have wrought sad change in thee;
 That it were better to forget
 Our youth's fond history.
 And yet I fain would clasp that hand,
 Would meet those eyes once more,
 One moment by thy side would stand,
 As I have stood of yore.

They say the very tones that thrill'd
 My heart, and dimm'd my eyes,
 Now, by the cold world's blighting chill'd,
 I scarce might recognise.
 And yet I long to hear thee speak,
 Repeat some bygone strain,
 Although the charm I there should seek
 Were listen'd for in vain.

I would not wish the years roll'd back,
 Could such a choice be mine,
 Nor falter in the onward track,
 Though sever'd far from thine.
 But pilgrims may from hard-won heights
 Receding homes survey,
 And give a sigh to past delights,
 Yet, sighing—turn away.

G. W.

Frederick Walker, I.R.A.

IN MEMORIAM.

HALF a dozen years ago, we had two painters whose pictures many of us used to look for first of all in the exhibitions, and dwell upon with most delight. Each of them in his way seemed to have brought new life into the English school. Each of them used to show us simple matters, painted with all truth and sincerity, and yet lighted up with one knew not what radiance, what rare and exquisite spirit of dignity and pathos. One of the two was by many years the elder. He had not been educated for an artist, but the soul of art was in him. He had painted first at Rome, and had come back, his mind's eye filled with the colours, looks, attitudes, of the South, to his native English midlands, and had recognised in them a kindred beauty, that beauty of the North which is not less real though it is more withdrawn, less obvious and frank for art to woo, than the beauty of the South. He wrought, in the face of neglect and illness, until he had revealed to us the unsuspected charm and nobleness of many a daily sight, and called out a hundred mellow harmonies from common things. The other and younger of the two had been trained and encouraged in the pursuit of art from his boyhood, and when he began to make his mark was almost a boy still. First he made designs for stories, to be engraved in books and periodicals. Next he used to exhibit drawings in water-colour, sometimes of new subjects, more commonly carrying out one or another of those book designs with a delicate perfection of life and grace we had hardly been aware of in the woodcut. Then, beginning about nine years ago, came a series of paintings in oil at the Royal Academy Exhibitions. There was that figure of a forlorn mother with her baby, who had lost her way in the snow. There was the long group of boys bathing and drying themselves among the broken light and ripples and meadow grasses of a sunny riverside in summer time. There was the gipsy family in a brown hollow of the heath under a brown sky,—the smoke wreathing up from the fire of sticks, the crouching woman and baby, the old man and boy, the tall scowling daughter in yellow, looking like some wild thing with her noble shape and rebellious glance. There was the gate of the impoverished Somersetshire manor-house, the neglected stone steps and armorial pillars, the figure of the high-bred widow coming out in her worn mourning, the stout country-girl who has held the gate respectfully open for her, the village children lolling on the steps, who as the lady comes out turn a little shyly in their play, the labourer, with his boy and dog, who carries his spade on his shoulder, and half pauses in his walk and takes his pipe from his mouth with an unconscious instinct of deference. There was the ploughman driving his plough through the rich loam of a sunken field after spring rain—the mighty frame and generous action of the great plough-horses, the water-brook brimmed and racing past the

young grasses of its banks, the untrimmed hedge alive in every spray with tender green, the brightness of the wet air and splendour of a sky clearing after storm. Then that wan vision in the gloom—a woman with clenched hands at the bar of justice, and hollow defiant looks awaiting sentence. And then the harbour of refuge—the red-brick courts of an ancient almshouse all glowing in the sunset, the hawthorn loaded with blossom, the bright lawn and daisies, the mower striding and swinging at his work, the sundial, and old folk drowsing away their afternoon, youth and age confronting us in the figures of a decrepit woman in black and the kind strong girl upon whose arm she leans. And lastly, this year, there is the winding path beside the winding stream. Spring meadows again, white foolish lambs sprinkled over the grass with their small bodies and great woolly legs stuck wide, a vehement stamping bell-wether, and a boy, sturdy enough to know better, who is frightened and shrinks back to the protecting arms of his grown-up sister. The series is closed now. Three years ago the elder artist, George Mason, ended his battle against hopeless malady, and that manly heart was at rest. And now the younger, Frederick Walker, is gone too. It is cruel how they are taken from us, our gifted ones, even while we watch for the ripening of their gifts. We naturally think of these two together, not because the one frequented or learnt from the other, for that was not the case, but because they were two in our midst who had in common, and above their fellows, that power of bringing out the daily beauty that lies hidden from duller senses, of fastening on the nobler and more touching aspects of the life about them.

An artist in modern times may look at the world in many different ways, and set himself one of many different tasks. The plainest difference lies in this, whether he chooses to look at the world in its fashion of to-day, and to represent the people he lives among as they are and look—to be a painter, as it is called, of contemporary subjects; or whether he chooses to think of the world under another fashion, to imagine types or personages that lived in far-off days, or else were shapen in dreams and never lived at all—to be a painter, as this is called, of history or imagination. The art of to-day can show us good work in both kinds. For the power of vividly seeing and apprehending realities, of setting down the subtlest aspects of things peculiarly modern, whether they are things graceful or humorous or tragic or debased—missing nothing, extenuating nothing—for this power, in its perfection, we should have to go to a certain section of the French school. For work of the imagination, for myths and inventions as passionate as those of Italy, and as full of rhythm and splendour and colour, we need not go beyond some famous studios at home. Many, indeed, there are who enter upon either task without the gifts it calls for, but with them we have nothing to do. Still less have we to do with the battle that is sometimes fought between the styles, and the question whether an artist is better occupied upon his own time or upon imagination and the past. Let him occupy himself according to his vocation, provided he really has one. I have dwelt for a moment on the

difference of the two vocations, only to say how some artists seem born with a third, which in some sort reconciles the other two and brings them together. Such artists look at the world actually round about them; but what they see and care for in it is not anything specifically and exclusively modern, it is something generally and ideally human, something which reveals a relationship between the modern and the ancient, between the simplest facts of our own world and the most heroic dreams of another. The limbs of men to-day are not so free, nor their frames so perfect, as they were in Hellas of old, nor have our gestures the ancient grace; but yet there is a likeness that can be discerned. A watchful eye can see a posture here, and a movement there, and anon a grouping of two or three in play or earnest, that is not so unlike the Elgin marbles after all. Of all artists of our time who have sought out this classical nobleness beneath the common actions of men, this secret of the ideal and the physically harmonious in simple life and conversation, the strongest perhaps was Jean François Millet, the great and patient painter of peasant life whom France has just lost. In England it was Mason and Walker who wrought in a kindred spirit.

I do not deny the danger of the attempt. The danger is, lest the artist in seeking for such appearances should lose hold of the truth—lest he should simply put an Elgin marble in modern clothes into his picture, instead of a gardener or ploughman or lady among her flowers, and so substitute a false ideal for the real, instead of disengaging out of the real a true ideal. That Walker always wholly avoided this danger would be too much to say. There are figures of his, nobly and powerfully designed, but of which it is impossible to deny that they look more heroic than they have any reason for looking, and that the action has been somewhat forced in order to give it grandeur. The ploughman in the picture called "The Plough," the mower in the "Harbour of the Refuge," and this year, the girl who puts an arm round her frightened brother in the "Right of Way," are figures of which this may fairly be said. But on the other hand how often, how continually, has he reconciled this classical grace with the most genuine truth to nature. Take the picture of the "Bathers," to my mind still the most entirely successful he ever did, and see what a perfect little Mercury, and yet what a perfect English boy, is that one who leans on one hand in the left of the picture to look at his companions in the water, with a battered felt hat stuck petasus-wise upon his head; what heroic figures and noble countenances are those of the two elder boys undressing in the middle, one kneeling on one knee, the other standing up; and yet how it is simply the heroism of bodily health and exercise, the nobleness of boyish candour and good spirits, such as you might have seen for yourself, if you had been blessed with that finer eyesight, in any playing-fields any day. And the exquisite grace of the women that he drew—it is often the grace of a Greek nymph or goddess almost, and yet there is nothing in it that you may not see in any English drawing-room or garden walk; it is no fancy, but has its roots in life and reality; it is only the physical excellence of

English maids and mothers discerned with a finer and more loving eye than others have, a little chosen, a little relieved and brought out, and represented with a hand of infinite precision and dexterity.

With his passion for grace and beauty, his instincts towards physical perfection and the ideal, it was very likely fortunate for the artist that his employments from the first should have been such as to bind him down to life and reality. The illustration of novels kept him versed in these, and compelled him to find beneath the every-day clothes of rich and poor, and in the looks that express every-day feelings, the hint for higher things. I have said that he was encouraged in the pursuit of art from a boy. He was born in 1840. His mother went only a few months before him to the grave, and her loving solicitude and sympathy for all he did, had been among the blessings he loved best to acknowledge. At seventeen or eighteen he was working in Leigh's drawing-school in Newman Street, which has been the nursery of many distinguished men. At the same time he was employed in Mr. Whymper's wood-engraving establishment. He used also to make sketches at a sketching-club, some of which I have seen—dexterous washings in Indian ink, full already of the shrewdest character and observation. He had very early acquired a precision of draughtsmanship, a vigour of whimsical or pathetic expression, foreign to the lax system in vogue at that time for woodcut designs. He was scarcely over twenty when he got into ample employment for illustrated publications. The number of illustrations engraved after his designs for *Once a Week* and for this Magazine during the next few years is very considerable indeed. Where, more justly than in these pages, should words of honour and regret be written in memory of him now that he has gone? Who of our readers has not known and taken delight in that sympathetic touch? Have we read about Philip in church beside the children? we may follow and see him there too, the great rough head bent beside those smooth cheeks and ringlets. Have we delighted in the manly spirit of the young Huguenot of Winchelsea? we turn the page and see how Denis Duval and Tom Parrott, for their good luck, went upstairs to look at Denis Duval's box with the pistol in it. Have we loved the stately Breton heroine of another and later story?—there we may see her, the beautiful high-souled creature, in her peasant dress and cap, sitting at her spinning-wheel. Have we listened, between tenderness and laughter, to the *vacarme* made by good Mr. Fontaine when he accompanied his wife on the cornet? and does it not do our hearts good to see the look of his face as he blows away in the lamplight—his wispy baldness and lean puckered cheeks and kind ugliness and simplicity, and Catherine's white face and figure against the dark, and little Toto leaning upon the piano? These and a score of other dainty images pass before me as I write. The artist had come, quite in those young days, to Mr. Thackeray, and had been received with a kindness that was never broken and that he loved to remember. At first, I believe, the arrangement was that he should adapt and polish the author's own sketches for the engraver; but this did not last, and afterwards, with one or two

exceptions, the designs were of his own conceiving as well as executing. He continued to illustrate the writings of his old friend's daughter after he had ceased to do any other work for the engraver, and always with the same exquisite tact and sympathy, not intruding on the story-teller's province, not seeking to be interesting or dramatic, but choosing this or that moment of the tale for the true artist's reason, for the charm of the looks and gestures he could fit to it, the combinations and groupings under which it presented itself to him. And many of these designs, enlarged and painted in water-colour, are among his most precious work, especially, to my mind, that one with *Petitpère* and *Reine* and *Catherine* at table before the open window. Then, only space fails, one would like to speak of some of the other water-colours, of his infinitely refined and lovely way in painting garden flowers and foliage—a lady watering her borders, another lady, beautiful exceedingly, sitting on the mound at the foot of the sundial in an old Scotch garden. Or of the style and beauty which he knew how to put into commoner things—the fishmonger's stall for instance, with its mackerel and red mullet, a very feast of delicate drawing and colour, its stout fishmonger leaning over to praise his goods, the perplexed damsel in her pretty flowered silk with her finger to her chin, the boy with his hoop. Or, what is important, the great and immediate influence his art had upon his contemporaries, and how both in water-colour and drawing for the wood-engraver he has been virtually the founder of a school. Or, what is a larger matter still, of the range and variety of sentiment which his work covered. This has not been sufficiently acknowledged. The "*Prisoner at the Bar*" showed what depths of tragedy sometimes haunted him; and other designs, such as the beautiful one of the "*Escape from the Slaver*," have much of the same intensity. Of those that bespeak his master instinct for grace, distinction, pathos, beauty, and noble looks in women and maidens, but above all in boys and little children, no more need be said. The fun and whimsicality and fine spirit of caricature, which was the other pole of his genius, is known to his friends only. Many of them keep and cherish numbers of the pen-and-ink drawings which he used to throw off in this vein. He was a great fisherman. One day a friend had sent him an account of a heavy fish he had caught, and an invitation to join the party. The reply is a drawing, quite brilliant and masterly, of the "*Temptation of Saint Anthony Walker*." He kneels in a long gown and hood upon a hassock, the tonsured likeness of himself, admirably humorous, painting and, as it were, doing penance at his easel. The tempter presents himself in the form of a huge and grinning Highland gillie with his rod, who rises from a water all ringed over with the leaping of salmon; the air is full of salmon, they leap and curl, drawn as only one who knew them well could draw them, and one of them thrusts his insidious nozzle between the very bars of the easel.

But it is not a criticism which I have undertaken to write in this place, still less a biography; only a few hasty words, which it is time to close, in memory of the gentle and gifted spirit we have lost. I do not

think there is any reason to suppose he had reached or approached the fulness of his powers. Scarcely any painter ever has reached it at thirty-five. And his methods hitherto had been always experimental, always rather uncertain, both in oil and water-colour, and showing the hand of one who was continually feeling after something greater than he could yet do. No man was ever more disinterested in the pursuit of his ideal. No man ever kept his art more free from the manufacturing taint of the age. Scarcely anything he did ever satisfied him. He produced, in quantity, less than many men not half as industrious. His conceptions would grow gradually from small beginnings: not one of his large designs but there exist for it a number of sketches, attempts, commencements, improved ideas. He was in the habit of altering, effacing, repainting, as he went along, often almost despairing and giving up. Those who knew him best knew little of his manner of work, but knew that he did not paint very much from models. In the street, in the country, on the river, among the antiques, everywhere, he was always stopping, watching, receiving and combining impressions, and in the studio his chief work lay in giving shape to the images that had formed themselves in that ever-active laboratory of his brain. He was poignantly sensitive to all kinds of impressions as well as to those of the lovely looks of human beings and aspects of the world which he has put on record for us. Music went through and through him. He was excessively tender to animals. The same intense and vibrating sensitiveness passed into his personal relations. One felt towards him almost as towards a woman or child, because of his small stature, his delicate hands and feet and quick emotions, as well as because of a look there was in his eyes like the wistful and liquid looks of children. Since his return from Algeria in the spring of last year, he had suffered severely in the throat and chest; but this spring had seemed to be better again, and had gone to fish with a friend in a remote part of Perthshire. There he was seized with the attack which carried him off. His sister, with whom and with his mother he had always lived, being attached to them with a touching and generous devotion, was with him at the last. And he lies buried in the churchyard of a sweet village by the Thames. He has gone to the undiscovered country, and we are left to mourn for many a fair vision unrealised. The undiscovered country—strange that the scheme he had been last intent upon was one of a picture of an unknown land, and voyagers coming to it from afar. A few days only before his death, his eyes had kindled at a friend's description of islands and promontories in the Antipodes. Can we not imagine something of what he had in his mind—some sweep of Southern ocean, some island-bay with sweet waters running down to it from inland, a boatful of anxious castaways—or eager explorers shall it be?—nearing the coast, beaching their craft, landing and grouped about the solitary shore? Nay, he liked not that his work should be talked about before it was done. Let us leave imagining what might have been, and be thankful for so much as was given us.—S. C.

British Birds and Bird Lovers.

EVER since the study of nature revived in this century at the close of the Great War, the observation of our native birds and their habits has possessed peculiar attractions for all quiet-minded people. No more charming recreation can be conceived, when its prosecution calls men to the varied scenery of English woodlands, to the sides of ancient rivers, the summits of the Lake mountains, or even the solitude of the wintry shore. But without going further afield than the lawn or garden, it is quite possible to develop a whole province of ornithological research, which ordinary people for the most part systematically ignore. Still further narrowing the field of view, many invalids have found an occupation congenial to their infirm energies, and just sufficiently absorbing to rouse the interest of a jaded mind, in watching the idiosyncrasies of birds allured by daily doles of food to their window-ledges. Cordial intimacies too have in this manner been struck up between the wise-looking jackdaws of the Bodleian Library (the modern substitutes for Athene's owls) and their unplumed fellow bipeds in the college rooms which overlook that classic haunt. Nor is it only in novels that sempstresses and clerks have learnt cheerfulness, and maintained at a higher level the flow of sympathy and tender affections, by tending a lark or canary within the still more confined space of a cage. He was a true benefactor of the human family who in the sixteenth century (as Bechstein supposes) introduced this latter bird into England from the Fortunate Isles; no computation can gauge the additional store of contentment and kindness which thereby accrued to mankind. Apart, however, from the country and the home life of the parlour, dwellers in cities may discover many traits of bird character evoked by civilisation amongst the street pigeons and gutter-haunting sparrows. An ornithological disciple of Mr. Darwin may thus deduce much amusing lore concerning the prominence which domestication affords to the evil qualities of the latter birds, while it fosters the peacefulness, trust, and graceful tenderness peculiar to the former. Curious speculations, not dissimilar to man's interminable disquisitions on predestination and free will, must also arise among the philosophical societies of bird life when they note the facts that *Passer domesticus*, always a rogue at his best, rapidly deteriorates into a smoke-begrimed impudent but self-possessed thief in our great cities, evidently from his admiring imitation of the rough; whereas in crowded Whitechapel, amongst costermongers, dog-stealers and the like, or on the gilded eaves of the countess's boudoir, a pigeon never forgets its innate

gentility. We must not, however, lose ourselves in ornithological metaphysics.

It is easy to see several reasons which account for the popularity of ornithology as a rural recreation. In the first place it can be pursued everywhere. Even the barest common has its birds, and yet there is just sufficient diversity amongst the birds which haunt similar localities in different counties, to interest the mind and induce philosophical reflection on the causes of this variation. Indeed the number of problems which the study of birds presents is another reason why it is so generally fascinating. The mere dilettante can amuse himself in solving these, while the professed student finds many which baffle his closest scrutiny. The migrations of swallows, for instance, were until recent years beset by the same haziness which attended them in Gilbert White's mind. People, sensible enough on other points, gravely affirmed that the approach of winter drove the *hirundines* to their hibernating quarters, hollow trees or the bottoms of rivers. The claims of overlapping species, of partial migration, of the abundance or paucity of allied species in different years, of the curious changes of colour in the plumage of many shore birds without their undergoing a moult, together with that special *crux* of most departments of natural history, what constitutes a species? are specimens of the speculations to which modern ornithology addresses herself. But even more difficult and delicate inquiries remain on such points as the presence of instinct and volition in bird life. The disappearance, whether partial or total, of different species from the several provinces of Great Britain, or even altogether from our islands, forms another interesting branch of study, and others might be indicated if the extent and variety of questions which imperatively demand an answer from the scientific ornithologist had not been sufficiently demonstrated. Perhaps the being brought face to face with nature while prosecuting these and the like inquiries, and freedom from the drudgery involved in the use of the microscope indoors, enter largely into the pleasures of the bird lover. And yet ornithology demands in the open air minute and extended observation, large powers of discrimination and comparison, and an enthusiasm which never flags at disappointment. The ornithologist might almost be weighed against the comprehensive standard of virtues required of the angler in the seventeenth century. He must be untiring and eagle-eyed, sanguine yet disinclined to believe on insufficient premises, a clever anatomist, a well-taught disciple of the inductive method, skilful at forming a hypothesis but slow to admit its truth without the most rigorous collection of instances and testing of their agreement. Such an admirable Crichton is the scientific ornithologist of the nineteenth century, and amongst our own countrymen such men can be counted on the fingers.

We must own to a strong sympathy for another kind of ornithologist, the practical worker of the parsonage lawn or the doctor's back garden. In many a country rectory Gilbert White's charming book and innocent life furnish a pattern for their contented and cultivated owners. Every

ramble through lanes smothered in honeysuckles, and along the oak-tufted uplands to the distant farm-house or knot of cottages which demand his ministrations, provides the parson with an inexhaustible fund of recreation. The creative marvels of earth and air form an appropriate study wherein he meditates, in accordance with high episcopal advice, his sermon for next Sunday; and the key-note of happiness ringing everywhere around him, pervades his meditations on Redeeming Love with admirable effect. Though his eyes take in the trout that leaps under the willow, as well as the ferns nodding above it and the butterfly borne on over the stream with somewhat fatal daring, his bosom friends are the birds. For him the kestrel hovers over the clover field, and the sparrowhawk dashes over its hedge, like the pirates of the Chinese seas, never visible until they make their swoop; the magpie chatters from her thorn bush, and the jay shows her blue feathers in the sunlight. Amongst the smaller birds too, the finches and larks, his observations are just as carefully made: the sky-lark transports his soul above to return on her lessening wings only to admire the more the beauty and prodigality of contrivance in the landscape spreading around. In such sort did that excellent prelate Bishop Andrewes "often profess that to observe the grass, herbs, corn, trees, cattle, earth, waters, heavens, any of the creatures, and to contemplate their natures, orders, qualities, virtues, uses, &c., was even to him the greatest mirth, content, and recreation that could be, and this he held to his dying day."* And the country parson keeps diaries and meteorological entries, in a somewhat erratic manner it may be, but still in a manner to qualify him to act as arbitrator on natural phenomena at the squire's dining-table or in the columns of the *County Jupiter*. All these little interests intensify his thankfulness and content, as the meadows waving with hay become still more beautiful to him when the wood-pigeon cooes over them from the plantation on the hill. "Passing rich on forty pounds a year," the good man's days are daily soothed by his feathered favourites, so that of all the walks in life he chiefly doats on the Happy Valley which bounds his own guileless activities.

Nor is it otherwise with the village doctor, so much of whose life is necessarily passed in the saddle or on the gig's seat visiting a widely scattered circle of patients. He observes as carefully as the parson, but from the bent of his mind, induced by his peculiar occupation, he proceeds a step further, to theorise on facts. As might be expected, the doctrine of the survival of the fittest is a favourite with him, and he has worked a good deal at natural selection, beginning at the few fossil birds which are as yet known to science. He is not even alarmed at "sexual dimorphism," and "divergent varieties." The parson is more attracted by the song, he by the sight of birds; where the former would lie on a bank listening and watching, his impulse, as being more pressed for time, is to

* Life by Isaacson, his Secretary.

shoot the bird. He has a fair collection of stuffed birds which (like the late Dr. Routh's books) has gradually overflowed his study, extended into dining-room and passages, and is now stealing into his bedrooms. It is noticeable too that whereas the parson from conservative tendencies clings fondly to the old Latin names wherewith birds were classed by Linnaeus in the last century, the doctor, with wider and more liberal views, prefers a brand new nomenclature. He professes also to be able to read with pleasure, after a long day of visiting and perhaps five hours in bed during the last three nights, an article in the *Ibis* which to the uninitiated resembles a catalogue of grotesque Latin names answering to nothing that he could recognise "in the flesh." In the same manner have we known a musical curate avow himself enraptured by merely poring over the score of *St. Paul* in lodgings which were too small to admit a piano. The contemplative but ignorant lover of birds stands aghast at this etymological development of modern ornithology. Every one knows the chiff-chaff's gentle note. The bird used to be called *Sylvia rufa*, and a pretty name it was, bringing before the mind's eye the dainty russet-clad denizen of our woodlands. Open a new ornithological work, and it is now branded as *Phylloscopus collybita*, which suggests nothing so much as Bucephalus broken to harness but a confirmed crib-biter. For the rest, our worthy doctor is one day transported into raptures by being authorised to write after his name those mystic letters M.B.O.U., which might seem to outsiders an appropriate attempt to reproduce the booming of the bittern, but which really denote Member of the British Ornithological Union.

These rustic worthies may well be placed in juxtaposition with a portrait from the busy town. Let us take a lawyer, pent up by day in the Temple and returning fagged at evening to his house in the West End. It would not be thought possible for him to find opportunities for ornithology, or even time to indulge in its study, save during the few weeks which he snatches in autumn for the grouse. But our friend is an early riser, and only those who have tried* rising with the lark know what a *rus in urbe* may be found before nine A.M. in the London Parks. Thrushes feed there late and early in the day, and even build in high trees inaccessible to boys. Chaffinches, gay as in a country orchard, may be seen there, and robins; indeed the latter penetrate, especially in winter, to the squares. There are rookeries at Kensington Palace and in Holland Park. The wood-pigeon's coo floats to the ears along with the distant roar of the awakening city, from the tallest trees in Kensington Gardens and Regent's Park.

* How very early this must be we have often experienced. In summer the lark warbles in the skies long before dawn. Milton has not left unnoticed this habit of the lark—

"To hear the lark begin his flight
And singing startle the dull night,
From his watch-tower in the skies
Till the dappled dawn doth rise."—*L'Allegro*, 41.

In this latter locality and in Hyde Park the blackcap sings during summer. In such situations too the swallow tribe may be noticed, being banished there and to the suburbs by the smoke and noise. The starling, however, makes its nests on the top of the tall West End mansions, and occasionally a few martins will build under the eaves of such houses. All these are favourites of our lawyer. He has ascertained that the birds indigenous to London may thus be catalogued, according to the frequency of their occurring:—Sparrow, redbreast, starling, rook, thrush, blackbird, blue titmouse. During the severe weather which closed 1874 fieldfares and redwings were picked up starved to death in the great West End thoroughfares. On one day at the beginning of January, 1874, our friend observed in the Temple Gardens as the snow was melting early in the afternoon a Royston crow, two redwings, two thrushes, a blackbird, several starlings and a moorhen. This was a red-letter day to the lawyer naturalist. The enumeration of these birds will surprise those who fancy that the practical study of ornithology is impossible in London, and nothing has been said of the many summer visitants which attentive observation will discover by their notes at early morning and after the park gates are closed at night. To ascend to a higher family than any which we have hitherto touched, some years ago a pair of sparrow-hawks reared their young among the coils of rope at the feet of Nelson in Trafalgar Square, and another pair for several seasons built and reared their young between the wings of the golden dragon which formed the weather-vane of Bow Church, Cheapside.* By noting these birds our lawyer relieves the monotony of business and proves conclusively that a love of nature is not incompatible with life in a great city.

In the portraits of the country clergyman and doctor, the contemplative and scientific aspects of the ornithologist have been lightly sketched; may we fill in these outlines by taking Christopher North and Charles Waterton, respectively, for the concrete expression of the idea? The one of these is emotional, the other logical; or (as perhaps it may be better stated), the one was a bird lover, the other an ornithologist. Intolerably prejudiced and egotistical was Waterton, and yet he is exact, painstaking, and persevering. Wilson, on the other hand, with a vast flow of animal spirits, and a fund of rhetoric which hurries him on *monte decurrens velut amnis*, grips your hand in his own hearty grasp, lets you into his inmost thoughts, and spirits you away with him on eagle's wings to the lonely moor and the plunging surf off the Stack Rocks. There he will pour out declamation by the hour on the falcon, and freeze the blood with his delineation of the midnight murders of the owl amongst that "feeble folk" the fieldmice; but no one can suppose the while that he is listening to exact science. Hear him enlarge on the raven: "The raven, it is thought, is in the habit of living upwards of a hundred years, perhaps a couple of centuries. Children grow into girls, girls into maidens, maidens into wives,

* For many of these facts see the *Field* for January 16 and 23, 1875.

wives into widows, widows into old decrepit crones, and crones into dust ; and the raven who wons at the head of the glen is aware of all the births, baptisms, marriages, death-beds, and funerals. Certain it is—at least men so say—that he is aware of the death-beds and the funerals. Often does he flap his wings against door and window of hut, when the wretch within is in extremity, or, sitting on the heather roof, croaks horror into the dying dream. As the funeral winds its way towards the mountain cemetery, he hovers aloft in the air, or, swooping down nearer to the bier, precedes the corpse like a sable saulie. While the party of friends are carousing in the house of death, he too, scorning funeral baked-meats, croaks hoarse hymns and dismal dirges as he is devouring the pet-lamb of the little grandchild of the deceased. . . . Dying ravens hide themselves from daylight in burial-places among the rocks, and are seen hobbling into their tombs, as if driven thither by a flock of fears, and crouching under a remorse that disturbs instinct, even as if it were conscience. So sings and says the Celtic superstition, muttered to us in a dream—adding that there are raven-ghosts, great black bundles of feathers, for ever in the forests, night-hunting in famine for prey, emitting a last feeble croak at the blush of the dawn, and then all at once invisible." * Poetry here thrusts science to the wall.

Contrast this striking but fanciful description with the matter-of-fact, careful, and precise observations of Waterton. Even in the case of so common a bird as the chaffinch, he takes nothing for granted, and displays the accurate eye and suggestive habits of thought of the true naturalist : " I see the chaffinch at almost every step. He is in the fruit and forest trees, and also in the lowly hawthorn ; he is on the housetop, and on the ground close to your feet. You may observe him on the stack-bar and on the dunghill ; on the king's highway, in the fallow field, in the meadow, in the pasture, and by the margin of the stream. His nest is a paragon of perfection. He attaches lichens to the outside of it by means of the spider's slender web. In the year 1805, when I was on a plantation in Guiana, I saw the humming-bird making use of the spider's web in its nidification, and then the thought struck me that our chaffinch might probably make use of it too. On my return to Europe, I watched a chaffinch busy at its nest ; it left it and flew to an old wall, took a cob-web from it, then conveyed it to its nest and interwove it with the lichen on the outside of it. . . . Like all its congeners, it never covers its eggs on retiring from its nest, for its young are hatched blind. The chaffinch never sings when on the wing, but it warbles incessantly on the trees and on the hedgerows, from the early part of February to the second week in July."† Every one is familiar with the chaffinch, and yet who does not learn something from this sketch ? How naturally, as it were, did the hypothesis of the spider's web being used for the chaffinch's nest come

* *Recreations*, vol. ii. p. 151. (Ed. 1868.)

† *Essays on Natural History*. First Series, 6th Ed. p. 280.

into the observer's mind. There is no attempt at fine writing, but these, and a few paragraphs which we have omitted, give a fair life history of the bird.

During the hard weather which closed 1874, bird lovers grieved over many birds which met their death by starvation. When a bird dies of old age, that curious instinct which is not wholly unknown in the higher animals, warns it to retire into a spot secluded from the busy life of its fellows. It is the rarest thing to find a dead bird save during a frost. Its rigours cause the weaker birds to forget the *convenances* of happier times, and the stronger instinct of self-preservation supersedes the love of a decorous death. Our northern visitors, the fieldfares and redwings, especially the latter, succumb first to cold. Redbreasts are also speedily affected, and are found before death hopping in yards, outhouses, &c., mere bags of bones. The migratory thrushes, during the severe spell of weather in last December, were driven to the abodes of men, and were even picked up dead in West End thoroughfares. Multitudes of them in their enfeebled condition are knocked down by village boys in the country, and many more shot by the prowling gunners who at such a time appear to spring up from the earth. On the Continent bird lovers are more humane. During the severe December of 1874, a society formed at Halle gave three meals a day to many hundreds of birds at twenty-two stations in the neighbourhood of the town, believing that the expense will be repaid a hundredfold by the destruction of noxious insects.

Spite of their small size, the wren and the diminutive gold-crest seem able to endure the most inclement weather. The tomtits also rejoice in it, and their merry twitterings are the only sounds which break the silence of the snow-laden pine woods. Blackbirds soon perish in severe weather, privation of food conspiring with the external cold to enfeeble them. The thrush, by dint of an occasional snail dragged out of its hibernaculum, has a better chance of life. Few people are aware what havoc a severe winter makes amongst our garden friends. "I estimated that the winter of 1854-5 destroyed four-fifths of the birds in my own grounds, and this is a tremendous destruction when we remember that ten per cent is an extraordinary severe mortality from epidemics with man."* Our British birds are commonly weather-wise, and a laggard swallow left behind by his brethren only serves as the exception to prove the rule. These departing flights of birds are seldom caught by inclement weather. Before it comes they take the wings of the north wind, and, after great parade and many preludes of flight from the top of the old barn or the tallest house of the neighbourhood, disappear one evening, and next day it is speedily found that summer has fled with them. We have, however, seen occasional stragglers among the *hirundines*; a chimney swallow, for instance, which hawked round a church during the sunny hours of noon on three days, in the middle of November, 1865, and

* Darwin's *Origin of Species*, 1st Ed. p. 68.

a swift in the middle of September, 1874, but a miserable end was in store for these lingerers, unless we believe the last century's theory of their sub-aqueous hibernation. Sometimes, too, sea-birds are driven inland by severe weather which has caught them on the coast, and then they perish miserably. Thus a Fulmar petrel was killed in a turnip-field in North Lincolnshire in 1867, which was unwounded, but from the buffetings of recent severe weather was apparently unable to rise from the ground; and in 1865 the same fate befell a red-necked grebe (*Podiceps rubricollis*) in that district, which though a distinctly marine species, was knocked on the head in a small pond inland after inclement weather. "There is a common notion that animals are better meteorologists than men," says Lowell, "and I have little doubt that in immediate weather-wisdom they have the advantage of our sophisticated senses, though I suspect a sailor or a shepherd would be their match." And then he goes on to instance thriftlessness on the part of American birds: "I have noted but two days' difference in the coming of the song-sparrow between a very early and a very backward spring. This very year I saw the linnets at work thatching just before a snowstorm which covered the ground several inches deep for a couple of days. They struck work and left us for a while, no doubt in search of food. Birds frequently perish from sudden changes in our whimsical spring weather, of which they had no foreboding. More than thirty years ago a cherry-tree, then in full bloom, near my window, was covered with humming-birds benumbed by a fall of mingled rain and snow, which probably killed many of them. It should seem that their coming was dated by the height of the sun, which betrays them into unthrifty matrimony."* Probably it is owing to our more genial climate that such mischances are rare amongst English birds. Just as Thoreau said, that if he fell into a trance in the midst of his beloved woodlands, he thought he could tell by the plants in flower around him, what time of the year it was within two days when he awoke, an English ornithologist would be at no loss to decide without a calendar on the day and month during early spring, if he might only note the arrival of our immigrants.

In the case of our larger birds, the enthusiastic collector will have to resort, it seems likely, in a very few years, to the dealers. Extermination is rapidly overtaking many of them. The last kite seen in Lincolnshire was shot about 1860. We have only witnessed their magnificent hoverings and great stretch of wing in South Wales. Ravens are banished to the higher mountains like Helvellyn, and to the most inaccessible sea cliffs. Others, such as the snowy owl or Egyptian vulture, are at the best of times very rare visitors, and only driven to us by stress of weather. The eagles, buzzards, and almost all the larger birds of prey are rapidly seeking the furthest corners of the land. The chough is extinct, save in a few favoured localities of the West. Game-preserving and modern agriculture do not harmonise with their presence. The readiest way of finding any

* See *My Study Windows*, Essays by Lowell, p. 5, London 1871.

of the *raptores* in the country is to seek the nearest wood, and there snugly sheltered at the end of a dewy "ride," across which pheasants strut and rabbits skip, and where chequered gleams of sunshine rest upon the herbage, stands the keeper's thatched cottage. On a gibbet over a row of weasels and village cats which have taken to poaching courses, dangles another series of criminals, owls, hawks, magpies, buzzards, &c., murdered by strychnine, or shot during the keeper's rounds, and hung up for an example to their marauding brethren, and in order that their slayer may claim blood-money of his employer. Many a lesson in ornithology may be taken at such spots, as the ichthyologist eagerly scans the mackerel seines for the treasures drawn up in them from the Devon seas after the hundreds of opaline mackerel have been taken out, and the worthless trash, as the fishermen deem it, flung aside.

It is incredible how high farming will change the avifauna of a district. A few years may indeed see a barren moorland smiling with corn-crops, but they will also banish or exterminate many species of birds. Thirty years ago a district in Lincolnshire midway between the wolds and the sea-marshes abounded with all the commoner birds. Jackdaws haunted the church towers, owls hovered over the stacks, hawks sailed over the hedgerows and startled magpies chattering underneath them over some unhappy soft-billed bird which had fallen into their clutches. Suddenly steam-threshing machines, followed in due time by steam-ploughs, came into vogue, new-fangled ideas about cutting down timber and plashing hedges to regulation height took possession of the rustic minds, and the face of the country having thus been transformed into the neatest series of "clean" fields that can be found even in that agricultural county, the birds departed along with summer greenery and May hawthorn blossoms. Owing to the destruction of the thistles, ragwort, &c., on whose seeds the goldfinch loves to feed, this bird is now very rarely seen in the district. As much corn was planted, it naturally had to be "tentled," so the nearest urchin who was too lazy to go to school and too small to drive a plough was placed amongst it armed with a rusty fowling-piece, and strict injunctions were given him to shoot at every feather he could see. Consequently all the larger birds were massacred and the smaller ones frightened out of the district. As their nesting coverts in the high hedges had been cut away, there was no temptation for the latter to return. Beyond a few flights of larks and peewits, and the saucy sparrows of the stackyards, a bird-lover may here wander through silent fields without being gladdened by the presence of his feathered friends. Even sparrows are slain by hundreds in some benighted parishes under the auspices of the local sparrow club, or the magnates of the vestry meeting. Doubtless such short-sighted wisdom will bring its own punishment. Increased insect ravages may compel the next generation to atone their fathers' misdeeds by importing the very birds which the latter so ruthlessly destroyed. In these favoured regions, however, lie the farmers' Elysian fields—"Everything so quiet! none o' them noisy buds! small fences for 'unting, and no trees to shade the wuts!"

Another cause which, if it has not diminished the numbers of the commoner birds, has decimated all the rarer kinds, springs from what in some points has conferred a great impulse on modern ornithology. Numerous publications on natural history carefully register all the more uncommon birds that are taken or observed. This practice, however, stimulates many collectors to win a doubtful immortality by shooting every strange bird they see, in the hopes that they may appear in print as the fortunate captors. Several leading ornithologists are now making a determined stand against recording the glorious fame of those who in this manner procure rare specimens, a decision which is much to be applauded. During the winter of 1874-5, for instance, vulgar avidity or misdirected zeal killed many bitterns in England, a pair of the smaller bustard, snow buntings, grey shrikes, Bohemian waxwings, rollers, and many rare kinds of ducks. How much better to have suffered the more uncommon amongst these birds daily to have drawn near to man more confidently, and exhibited unharmed their beauty and peculiar instincts! If such birds must be shot for the sake of science, the modern plan of preserving them as skins with arsenical soap should be adopted; these skins can be kept in a drawer and examined when required without doing them the least injury, which is far preferable to having them mounted in glass cases. Apart from scientific ends, to slay a rare bird, like the rose-coloured pastor, or even an unusual one, such as the innocent kestrel, whose fare consists of mice, for the sake of keeping its grotesque mummy in a glass case where it may minister to the vanity of its possessor, is a crime against society at large. It requires a very observant naturalist and admirable taxidermist to set up a bird with careful reference to its form and habits when alive. Every bird-stuffer does not possess the genius of Mr. Hancock, whose case of falcons must be remembered by every visitor to the Exhibition of 1851. There is not a more depressing sight to a lover of bird-life than the boxes of so-called stuffed birds which are suspended in many suburban lodgings and country inns. Shooting birds in order that they may be converted into such miserable caricatures of their original selves ought to be an offence punishable by fine and imprisonment. Few people are aware how profitably birds may be studied by means of a binocular, and how many innocent and beautiful lives might thus be annually saved to brighten the face of the country. No true ornithologist will use the gun save in extreme cases.

One of the most tantalising accidents which can happen to an ornithologist is when a rare bird is eaten by its captor through ignorance of its value. Oftentimes this must occur in out-of-the-way districts where all wild-fowl shot during winter are indiscriminately called ducks, and at once consigned to the cook. We lately heard of a case in point. The governor of one of England's smaller dependencies invited his secretary, an ardent ornithologist, to dinner. After the game had been discussed the latter casually asked a few questions on the birds he had just eaten and was told by the governor that he did not know what they were, but

some of their feathers had been preserved. The poor secretary was broken-hearted on inspecting these. He had actually helped to eat three of Pallas's sand grouse, for which he would willingly have given half his substance in order to add them to his collection. The fate of rare birds is at times even more sad than this. Dwellers in the midland counties must often have listened with pleasure during the short nights of June to the monotonous croaking of the landrail from the uncut hay beyond the garden. This bird is very local, and is shot as a dainty morsel whenever it is seen. Luckily, like Wordsworth's cuckoo, it has the nature more of "a wandering voice" than a bird, and for the most part easily escapes its pursuers when it is heard in an unusual locality. The only nightingale which we have ever known to appear in Devon was not so fortunate. It was seen during summer 1860 in the neighbourhood of Exmouth, but was pelted to death by the idle boys of the vicinity, much as the Bæchantes of old tore Orpheus to pieces. To know the common birds of a district and to become familiar with their migrations, changes of plumage, the reasons of their abundance or scarcity in particular seasons, and the like, is a more rational and satisfactory method of studying ornithology than simply to hunt after rare specimens. It does not fall to every one's lot to secure so rare a bird as once happened to a friend who was shooting along the north-west coast of Caithness. The day was bitterly cold and the snow falling fast when he winged a wild duck and suddenly beheld what seemed an animated mass of snow-flakes swoop down upon and carry it off before his eyes. The second barrel was fired and brought down a fine specimen of the snowy owl (*Surnia nyctea*) still clinging to the duck. The two were stuffed and set up together, forming an interesting memento of a curious episode in an ordinary day's shooting. Nor is it every ornithologist who can boast the *nonchalance* of a writer to the Signet who dwelt hard by the North Inch at Perth. His legal slumbers were disturbed one wintry night by the rush of innumerable wings overhead. Opening his window and seizing his gun he at once discharged it into the darkness above him and placidly returned to his couch. Next morning the results of his midnight sporting were seen on drawing up the blind in a wild goose, which lay dead in the little garden. One more nocturnal reminiscence must end this part of our subject. Who that has dwelt near the East Anglian seaboard can ever forget the charm of the wailing plovers as they pass to their feeding-grounds during the darkness of winter nights? This melancholy sound harmonises well with the hour and the solitude of the country. The imaginative scholar calls to mind as he hears their weird notes the thin ghosts which Homer so admirably describes wailing, as they fitted through Hades, like so many bats—

ὡς δ' ὅτε νυκτερίδες μυχῷ αὐτροῦ θεσπεσίοιο
 τρίβουσαι ποτέονται, ἐπεὶ κέ τις ἀποπέσῃιν
 ὀρμαβοῦ ἐκ πέτρης, ἀνά τ' ἀλλήλησιν ἔχονται
 ὡς αἱ τετιγυῖαι ἄμ' ἦσαν—

or the disembodied spirits of the Celtic immigrants of Brittany, who were compelled, according to Procopius, to cross the straits for interment in Cornwall, and who wailed dismally as they made their last voyage.

All who love birds have much reason to be thankful to the legislature for the passing of the two Bird Bills. The wanton and continued massacres of sea-birds, especially on the Yorkshire coast, and the complaints of mariners that they thereby lost the invaluable assistance of the seamew's screams in warning them off rocks during foggy weather, created so strong a feeling throughout the country that the Act which establishes a close season for seabirds during their breeding time (April 1—Aug. 1) was passed in 1869. How well this Act has worked in increasing both the numbers and the confidence of that beautiful class of birds which frequent the waves must be apparent to any one who spends a summer at the seaside. The persistent efforts of enlightened agriculturists and lovers of the country succeeded in 1872 in obtaining a similar Bill for the protection of the land-birds. Some seventy-nine of the birds most commonly seen round our habitations are thus guarded during their breeding season (March 15—Aug. 1), and although opinions may differ upon some of the birds included and others which are left unprotected, the Act is unquestionably of the utmost gain to every admirer of birds and to the cause of ornithology at large. The necessity of taking out a gun licence protects the denizens of our fields and lanes at other seasons from many a pot-hunting gunner, and if the fair sex would only be true to their tender instincts and refrain from wearing skins or feathers of wild birds in their hats or on their dress generally, as has lately been so well pointed out by the Baroness Burdett-Coutts in her pathetic plea for the humming-birds, the last obstacle would be removed from the free and full enjoyment of their lives on the part of our native birds, and a very large element of pleasure would be added to the existence of all who inhabit the country. British ornithology is often regarded as a stationary science which occasionally rejoices over the shooting of a rare bird. To show its progressive character, one or two curious problems may be mentioned which it is hoped, will be solved by the ensuing Arctic Expedition. The great auk (*Alca impennis*), though possessing in past years a fair right to be included among British birds, has been long extinct in our islands. Its existence elsewhere may even be questioned. If still inhabiting our planet it is rigorously confined to regions high up in the Arctic Circle. There is no certain English specimen of the bird now existing, although some seventy examples of it may be found in English collections, and of two or three of these there is little doubt that they were blown ashore on our coasts. It may be interesting to gather up the most recent notices of this very rare bird in our islands. Probably the last that has been seen in English waters was picked up dead near Lundy Island in 1829. Thompson * states that one was obtained on the

* Nat. Hist. of Ireland, III. p. 239.

long strand of Castle Freke (in the west of the County of Cork) in February, 1844, having been watersoaked in a storm. It is not stated whether this bird was dead. Again, the same author states he had "little doubt that two great auks were seen in Belfast Bay on September 28, 1845, by H. Bell, a wild-fowl shooter. He saw two large birds the size of great northern divers, but with much smaller wings. He imagined they might be young birds of that species until he remarked that their heads and bills were 'much more clumsy' than those of the *Colymbus glacialis*. They kept almost constantly diving, and went to an extraordinary distance each time with great rapidity." All this exactly answers to what is known of the great auk with its curious rudimentary wings. Probably one of the last eggs taken is in the collection of Canon Tristram. It was found in 1884 at Gier-fugleshier, on the south coast of Iceland. The last notice of it which has reached civilisation from the Arctic regions is that Mr. Hayes was told by the governor of the Danish settlement of Godhavn in Greenland that "one had recently been seen on one of the Whale-fish Islands. Two years before one had been actually captured by a native, who being very hungry and wholly ignorant of the value of the prize he had secured, proceeded at once to eat it, much to the disgust of Mr. Hansey" (the governor) "who did not learn of it until too late to come to the rescue."* This happened in 1869. The great auk seems but too surely following the wingless dodo and moa. The type is as unfitted for the present age as would be the plesiosaurus in the valley of the Thames.

From these distant speculations it is pleasant to return to the ornithologist's study, where, surrounded by the ensigns of his craft, sits our theorist—

In regions mild, of calm and serene air,
Above the smoke and stir of this dim spot
Which men call earth.

His bookcases groan under the volumes of Yarrell, McGillivray, Gould, and a multitude more written by men like Gray or Saxby, who have devoted their lives to illustrate the bird-life of some particular British province. Binocular, microscope, and materials for taxidermy litter the table by the sunny window-seat. One pair of Royston crows, converted into feather screens, such as Egyptian mutes might wave in one of Mr. Alma Tadema's pictures, hang over the fireplace. This bird is so destructive to game, bearing in every point a character as black as its own head, that it is ruthlessly excepted from the general amnesty a true bird lover proclaims to every other bird that visits our shores. A few—very few—choice birds, excellently stuffed, occupy some glass-cases; the bulk of the ornithologist's collection is in the form of skins, each neatly dated and labelled with mystic signs, which are as Abracadabra to the unini-

* J. J. Hayes, *Land of Desolation*, p. 291.

tiated. Taking these from the drawers in which they repose, in an atmosphere fatal to moths and insect ravagers of all kinds, owl and hawk peacefully resting next the soft-billed birds on which during life they preyed, the enthusiast lovingly smoothes each feathered ghost, and lays it softly down in the limbo of winged creatures which once trilled and screamed and called and swooped and dived and hovered over many a mountain and many a well-watered woodland. In such wise might Aristotle have sat musing over the specimens his royal pupil sent him from India, or Pliny balanced the evidence for and against the credibility of Apicius' dogma that the daintiest morsel of a flamingo is its tongue. Draw near and desire speech with the owner of this charming room. He either speculates on the higher problems of his science whereof we have spoken, or he is at work upon some curious fact in the economy of his favourites. Why, for instance, in nine cases out of ten, is a piece of serpent's skin* placed loosely at the bottom of the rufous warbler's nest in Algeria, a species of which two specimens have recently been obtained in Great Britain? or what impulse in certain years brings certain species of birds to well-defined portions of Great Britain, as, for example, why in the autumns of 1866 and 1869 were there extraordinary arrivals of grey phalaropes along the south-east and southern coasts? On such questions he will enlarge with avidity, perhaps at too great length for perfect sympathy, if his companion be not bitten with the ornithological mania. But this is only the amiable failing of all enthusiasts, and the victim can always remember betimes the warning of the Sabellian sibyl—

Hunc neque dira venena nec hosticus auferet ensis
Nec laterum dolor aut tussis nec tarda podagra ;
Garrulus hunc quando consumet cunque ; loquaces,
Si sapiat, vitet.

After all, the study which is most to the mind of the practical ornithologist is that bounded by blue sky and purple hills. It is when face to face with birds in their own cherished localities that their lover finds truest solace and refreshment. And it is the perennial character of these charms that forms the chief recommendation of ornithology to so many lovers of the country. By day or night, at every season, in every place, its influences appeal to their votary. Does he fling down his book, tempted by the grateful evening, and saunter through his garden to the lane beyond? The chiff-chaff, the green linnet, and the redbreast twitter at his approach; blackbird and thrush songs are pealing from the elms that skirt the pleasaunce; the meek hedge-sparrow and bustling wren thread their way through the fences at his approach; missel-thrushes are screaming themselves hoarse at a cuckoo, which has settled on a bush too near their nest in the great thorn-bush as he enters the park; wood-

* See the singular reason brought forward in Professor Newton's *Yarrell*, I. p. 358.

pigeons murmur their ancient loves across its glades; jackdaws caw round the lightning-blasted ash-tree, and from afar—

*E pastu decedens agmine magno
Corvorum increpuit densis exercitus alis.*

It is a typical picture of English home life, telling of immemorial peace and haunts securely appropriated by many a generation of birds, where never prowling urchin climbs to harry nests, and keepers seldom trouble themselves to shoot, a very Avalon of bird happiness. As our student of all these blissful creatures returns home in the mellow spring twilight, he is serenaded by the nightingale and good-naturedly hooted by the brown owl for intruding on her "ancient solitary reign," in the clump of Scotch firs. How infinitely more interesting has been his walk, because he has learned to recognise and love these birds!

Or, suppose him wandering over the russet fells of Cumberland, where the busy world, dimly descried from a rock-ledge, slumbers far below the eastern horizon, shrouded in smoke which is traversed here and there by a fitting sunbeam—he has no sense of solitude when alone here with his feathered friends. The common pipit flutters in front of him, that most characteristic bird of mountain and moorland; the dottrel and the golden plover in his summer plumage wing their way high above their nests; the dunlin or "plover's page," as it is sometimes called, also in its nuptial black-belted attire, rises before him, while the wheat-ear flirts his tail on every boulder that lies in his path. As he gains the crest of the granite fells, a raven slowly flaps up with gorged maw and hoarse croaks of alarm from the carcass of a sheep below him on the broken rocks, the buzzard floats in mid air adown the precipices, or its bolder kinsman the little merlin dashes off the cairn which holds its nest. When he dips down the low-lying valleys white-collared ouzels rise from the mountain side, and the curlew screams as it hurries over the boggy reach where cotton grass waves and many a white and yellow saxifrage blooms to charm the botanist. In these districts the ornithologist sees another side of bird life, the freedom and careless audacity of the mountain birds when bringing up their young. Delighted at being thus admitted to the domestic life of so many species generally met in very different localities, and oblivious of hunger and fatigue, the ornithologist, if any one, can fully enter into the varied beauties of such a walk. The ordinarily wild birds, now comparatively tamed by solitude and nesting cares, harmonise with the stag moss and other Alpine plants flowering like a crown for the majestic mountains. Their notes of alarm do but serve to intensify the mystic strangeness of the scene, through which the bird lover roams delighted, as a favoured mortal might ramble in fairy land.

Let him now descend to the valleys, to the low ground below the last tarn, where the thin sod trembles under his foot, and tall sedges and hillocks of marsh plants diversify a wide expanse of shallow water. Here, if it be late autumn, Virgil's words (himself evidently no mean ornitholo-

gist) will exactly describe the scene, as Homer, the "myriad-minded man," had taught him :—

Jam varias pelagi volucres, et quæ Asia circum
Dulcibus in stagnis rimantur prata Caystri,
Certatim largos humeris infundere rores ;
Nunc caput objectare fretis, nunc currere in undas
Et studio incassum videas gestire lavandi.—(GEORG. I. 383.)

Mr. Knox, in his delightful book on the Spey, describes a water-piece from a Scotch loch which might well form a companion picture. If the busy crowd of fen-loving birds is to be adequately depicted in English poetry, the ornithologist must go back to an authority who lived in the palmy times of the fens, to Michael Drayton. The ducks and teal he dwells upon with all the zest of an epicure :—

The goosander with them my goodly fens do show,
His head as ebon black, the rest as white as snow.
With whom the widgeon goes, the golden-eye, the smeath,
And in old scattered pits, the flags and reeds beneath,
The coot, bald else clean black ; that whiteness it doth bear
Upon the forehead starred, the water-hen doth wear
Upon her little tail, in one small feather set.
The water-ousel next, all over black as jet,
With various colours, black, green, blue, red, russet, white,
Do yield the gazing eye as variable delight
As do those sundry fowls, whose several plumes they be.*

The plough has long since made serious inroads into the heart of the Fens. These birds and their congeners now appear by twos and threes in hard winters where their progenitors mustered in flocks of thousands—

Their numbers being so great, the waters covering quite,
That rais'd, the spacious air is darkened with their flight.

Most delightful of all rambles however to the bird lover, from the varied beauties of running water, curving banks and contrasts of vegetation, is a walk down the little stream which issues from some such fen, as we have fancied—like Dart from the wastes of Cranmere or Tweed from its parent moss—and merrily hastens onwards past cultivated fields till it attains the dignity of a river, and laves the abodes of men. By its eddies Virgil must once more limn the birds with that delicate touch which is so characteristic of him, must tell how

Tepidum ad solem pennas in litore pandunt
Dilectæ Thetidi alcyones ;

and again, with their note of joy from the adjacent oaks :

Liquidas corvi presso ter gutture voces
Aut quater ingeminant ;

and depict the falcon which pursues its quarry over the reed beds as

* *Polyolbion*, 25th song.

graphically as it would have been represented by Landseer in the sister art. The flash of their wings in the sunlight can be seen :

Qua se fert Nisus ad auras,
Illa levem fugiens raptim secat aethera pennis.

Onward the ornithologist fares, noticing every bird as he passes, and still unable to shake off the poet's spell when Tereus and hapless Itys and Progne skim before his path :

Nec gemere aëria cessabit turtur ab ulmo.

Classical recollections must not however fascinate us too long. The curious instincts of the birds to be met on the river's banks are sufficiently charming in themselves. Who can forget the thrill of pleasure with which

Nigh upon the hour
When the lone hern forgets her melancholy,
Sets down his other leg, and stretching, dreams
Of goodly supper in the distant pool,*

he has startled the bird from its reverie, and watched its heavy flight as it dragged its legs over the placid stream till it could catch the air with its wings? The common sandpiper whistles in front, the grey wagtail struts under the overhanging bank, the water-hen and coot paddle across to the opposite tangle of sedges. Auceps will here meet Piscator,—Oh! that we could overhear their colloquy as each extols his craft.

Already the roar of the ocean begins to sound in our ears, and the screams of its fowl overhead wheeling round before the coming storm warn us to conclude our walk. In pursuing this fascinating study of our native birds, it should always be remembered, that kindness and protection form the surest road to their hearts. It is wonderful what secrets of bird-life may be extracted by these pass-keys to their confidence. These humane virtues have given rise to a beautiful belief in the Val St. Veronique, which is not altogether unknown in Oriental and North American superstitions, that certain wise and elderly persons can enter into and understand the language of the birds. "But there is one peculiarity in the Val St. Veronique,"† says Mr. Hamerton. "He who knows the bird-language is forbidden by the popular superstition to communicate it to any one until he lies upon his death-bed, when he may teach it to one member of his family, who of course is bound by the same law. Now, as it generally happens that a man lying upon his death-bed has other things to think of than the transmission of bird-lore," it is not wonderful that the secret gradually becomes known to fewer men in these degenerate days. We have attempted to indicate some methods by which lovers of nature may possibly recover the lost knowledge. With birds, as with everything else, love always begets love.

* Tennyson, "Gareth and Lynette."

† In the *Portfolio* for 1874, p. 160.

Penelope, and other Women of Homer.

PENELOPE is the exact opposite to Helen.* The central point in her character is intense love of her home, an almost cat-like attachment to the house where she first enjoyed her husband's love, and which is still full of all the things that make her life worth having. Therefore, when at last she thinks that she will have to yield to the suitors and leave it, these words are always on her lips :

δῶμα
 κούριδιον μάλα καλὸν ἐνὶ πλεῖον βιότοιο,
 τοῦ ποτε μεμνήσεσθαι ὄλομαι ἔνπερ' ὄνειρος.

We can scarcely think of Penelope except in the palace of Ithaca, so firmly has this home-loving instinct been embedded in her by her maker. Were it not that the passion for her home is controlled and determined by a higher and more sacred feeling, this Haushälterischness of Penelope would be prosaic. Not only, however, has Homer made it evident in the *Odyssey* that the love of Ithaca is subordinate in her soul to the love of Odysseus; but a beautiful Greek legend teaches how in girlhood she sacrificed the dearest ties which can bind a woman, to her love for the hero who had wooed and won her. Pausanias says that when Odysseus was carrying her upon his chariot forth to his own land, her father Icarus followed in their path and besought her to stay with him. The young man was ready, busked for the long journey. The old man pointed to the hearth she had known from childhood. Penelope between them answered not a word, but covered her face with her veil; this action Odysseus interpreted rightly, and led his bride away, willing to go where he would go, yet unwilling to abandon what she dearly loved. No second Odysseus could cross the woman's path. Among the suitors there was not one like him. Therefore she clung to her house-tree in Ithaca, the olive round which Odysseus had built the nuptial chamber; and none, till he appeared, by force or guile might win her thence. It is precisely this tenacity in the character of Penelope which distinguishes her from Helen, the daughter of adventure and the child of change, to whom migration was no less natural than to the swan that gave her life. Another characteristic of Penelope is her prudence. Having to deal with the uproarious suitors camped in her son's halls, she deceives them with fair words, and promises to choose a husband from their number when she has woven a winding sheet for Laertes. Three years pass, and the work is still not finished. At last a maiden tells the suitors that every night

* See *Cornhill Magazine* for April, 1875.

Penelope undoes by lamplight what she had woven in the daytime. This ruse of the defenceless woman has passed into a proverb ; and has become so familiar that we forget perhaps how true a parable it is of those who in their weakness do and undo daily what they would fain never do at all, trifling and procrastinating with tyrannous passions which they are unable to expel from the palace of their souls. The prudence of Penelope sometimes assumes a form which reminds us of the heroines of Hebrew story, as when, for example, she spoils the suitors of rich gifts by subtle promises and engagements carefully guarded. Odysseus seated in disguise near the hall-door watches her success and secretly approves. The same quality of mind makes her cautious in the reception of the husband she has waited for in widowhood through twenty years. The dog Argus has no doubt. He sees his master through the beggar's rags, and dies of joy. The handmaid Eurycleia is convinced as soon as she has touched the wound upon the hero's foot and felt the well-remembered scar. Not so Penelope. Though the great bow has been bent and the suitors have been slain, and though Eurycleia comes to tell her the whole truth, the queen has yet the heart to seat herself opposite Odysseus by the fire, and to prove him with cunningly devised tests. There is something provocative of anger against Penelope in this cross-questioning. But our anger is dissolved in tears when at last, feeling sure that her husband and none other is there verily before her eyes, she flings her arms around him in that long and close embrace. Homer even in this supreme moment has sustained her character by a trait, which, however delicate, can hardly escape notice. Her lord is weary and would fain seek the solace of his couch. But he has dropped a hint that still more labours are in store for him. Then Penelope replies that his couch is ready at all times and whensoever he may need ; no hurry about that ; meanwhile she would like to hear the prophecy of Teiresias. Helen, the bondwoman of dame Aphrodite, would not have waited thus upon the verge of love's delight, long looked for with strained widow's eyes. Yet it would be unfair to Penelope to dwell only on this prudent and somewhat frigid aspect of her character. She is perhaps most amiable when she descends among the suitors and prays Phemius to cease from singing of the heroes who returned from Troy. It is more than she can bear to sit weaving in the silent chamber mid her damsels, listening to the shrill sound of the lyre and hearing how other men have reached their homes, while on the waves Odysseus still wanders, and none knows whether he be alive or dead. It may be noticed that just as Helen is a mate meet for easily persuaded Menelaus and luxurious Paris, so Penelope matches the temper of the astute, enduring, persevering Odysseus. As a creature of the fancy she is far less fascinating than Helen ; and this the poet seems to have felt, for side by side with Penelope in the *Odyssey* he has placed the attractive forms of Circe, Calypso, and Nausicaa. The gain is double ; not only are the hearers of the romance gladdened by the contrast of these graceful womer with the somewhat elegiac figure of Penelope ; but the charac-

ter of Odysseus for constancy is greatly enhanced. How fervent must the love of home have been in the man who could quit Calypso after seven years' sojourn, for the sake of a wife grown grey with twenty widowed years! Odysseus tells Calypso to her face that she is far fairer than his wife:

πάντα μάλ', οὐνεκα σείω περίφρων Πηνελόπεια
εἶδος ἀκιδνοτέρη, μέγεθος ὃ, εἰς ὄμμα ἰδέσθαι.

"As far as looks go, Penelope is nothing beside thee." But what Odysseus leaves unsaid—the grace of the first woman who possessed his soul—constrains him with a deeper, tenderer power than any of Calypso's charms. Penelope, meanwhile, is pleading that her beauty in the absence of her lord has perished:

ἔκιν' ἦτοι μὲν ἐμὴν ἀρετὴν εἶδος τε δέμας τε
ᾤλεσαν ἀθάνατοι ὅτε Ἴλιον εἰσανέβαινον
Ἀργεῖοι.

These two meet at last together, he after his long wanderings, and she having suffered the insistance of the suitors in her palace; and this is the pathos of the *Odyssey*. The woman, in spite of her withered youth and tearful years of widowhood, is still expectant of her lord. He, unconquered by the pleasures cast across his path, untterrified by all the dangers he endures, clings in thought to the bride whom he led forth, a blushing maiden, from her father's halls. O just, subtle and mighty Homer! There is nothing of Greek here more than of Hebrew, or of Latin, or of German. It is pure humanity.

Calypso is not a woman, but a goddess. She feeds upon ambrosia and nectar, while her maidens spread before Odysseus the food of mortals. Between her and Hermes there is recognition at first sight; for god knows god, however far apart their paths may lie. Yet the love that Calypso bears Odysseus brings this daughter of Atlas down to earth; and we may reckon her among the women of Homer. How mysterious, as the Greek genius apprehended mystery, is her cavern, hidden far away in the isle Ogygia, with the grove of forest-trees before it and the thick vine flourishing around its mouth. Meadows of snowflake and close-flowering selinus gird it round; and on the branches brood all kinds of birds. It is an island such as the Italian painters bring before us in their rarest moments of artistic divination, where the blue green of the twilight mingles with the green blue sea, and the overarching verdure of deep empurpled forest shade. Under those trees, gazing across the ocean, in the still light of the evening star, Odysseus wept for his far distant home. Then, heavy at heart, he gathered up his raiment, and clomb into Calypso's bed at night:

ἔπειθ' οὐκ ἔτι ἦν θάνα νύμφη.
ἀλλ' ἦτοι νόκτας μὲν λαΐσκεν καὶ ἀνάγκη
ἐν σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσι παρ' οὐκ ἐθέλων ἐθέλουσθ.

To him the message of Hermes recalling him to labour on the waves was

joy. But to the nymph herself it brought mere bitterness: "Hard are ye, gods, and envious above all, who grudge that goddesses should couch thus openly with mortal men, if one should make a dear bedfellow for herself. For so the rosy-fingered morning chose Orion, till ye gods that lead an easy life grew jealous, and in Ortygia him the golden-throned maid Artemis slew with her kind arrows." This wail of the immortal nymph Calypso for her roving spouse of seven short years has a strange pathos in it. It seems to pass across the sea like a sigh of winds awakened, none knows how, in summer midnight, that swells and dies far off upon moon-silvered waves. The clear human activity of Odysseus cuts the everlasting calm of Calypso like a knife, shredding the veil that hides her from the eyes of mortals; then he fares onward to resume the toils of real existence in a land whereof she nothing knows. There is a fragment of his last speech to Penelope, which sounds like an echo of Calypso's lamentation. "Death," he says, "shall some day rise for me, tranquil from the tranquil deep, and I shall die in delicate old age." We seem to feel that in his last trance Odysseus might have heard the far-off divine sweet voice of Calypso calling him and have hastened to her cry.

Circe is by no means so mysterious as Calypso. Yet she belongs to one of the most interesting families in Greek romance: her mother was Perse, daughter of Oceanus; her father was Helios; she is own sister therefore to the Colchian Æetes and aunt of the redoubtable Medea. She lives in the isle Ætæa, not like Calypso, deep embowered in groves, but in a fair open valley sweeping downward to the sea, whence her hearth-smoke may be clearly descried. Nor is her home an ivy-curtained cavern of the rocks, but a house well-built of polished stone, protected from the sea-winds by oak woods. Here she dwells in grand style, with nymphs of the streams and forests to attend upon her, and herds of wild beasts, human-hearted, roaming through her park. Odysseus always speaks of her with respect as *πόντια Κίρκη* . . . *διὰ θάλασσαν* . . . *Κίρκη ἐνπλόκαμος δεινὴ θεὸς ἀδίδεσσα*. Like Calypso, she has a fair shrill voice that goes across the waters, and as her fingers ply the shuttle, she keeps singing through the summer-air. By virtue of her birthright, as a daughter of the sun, she understands the properties of plant and drug. Poppy and henbane and mandragora, all herbs of subtle juice that draw soul-quelling poison from the fat earth and the burning sun, are hers to use as she thinks fit. And the use she makes of them is malicious; for fairy-like and wanton, she will have the men who visit her across the seas, submit their reason to her lure. Therefore she turns them to swine; and the lions and wolves of the mountain she tames in like manner, so that they fawn and curl their long tails and have no heart to ravin any more. This is how she treats the comrades of Odysseus: "She drew them in and set them on benches and on chairs, and put before them cheese and meat and yellow honey, mixing therewith Pramnian wine: but with the food she mingled baleful drugs, to make them quite forget their fatherland. But when she had given them thereof and they had drunk, straightway she smote them with a rod and shut

ter of Odysseus for constancy is greatly enhanced. How fervent must the love of home have been in the man who could quit Calypso after seven years' sojourn, for the sake of a wife grown grey with twenty widowed years! Odysseus tells Calypso to her face that she is far fairer than his wife:

οἶδα καὶ αὐτὸς ὅτι
πάντα μάλ', οὐνεκα σείο περίφρων Πηνελόπεια
εἶδος ἀκιδνοτόρη, μέγεθός γ', εἰς ὄμμα ἰδέσθαι.

"As far as looks go, Penelope is nothing beside thee." But what Odysseus leaves unsaid—the grace of the first woman who possessed his soul—constrains him with a deeper, tenderer power than any of Calypso's charms. Penelope, meanwhile, is pleading that her beauty in the absence of her lord has perished:

ξεῖν' ἦτοι μὲν ἐμὴν ἀρετὴν εἶδος τε δέμας τε
ᾤλεσαν ἄθνατοι ὅτε Ἴλιον εἰσανέβαινον
'Αργεῖοι.

These two meet at last together, he after his long wanderings, and she having suffered the insistence of the suitors in her palace; and this is the pathos of the *Odyssey*. The woman, in spite of her withered youth and tearful years of widowhood, is still expectant of her lord. He, unconquered by the pleasures cast across his path, unterrified by all the dangers he endures, clings in thought to the bride whom he led forth, a blushing maiden, from her father's halls. O just, subtle and mighty Homer! There is nothing of Greek here more than of Hebrew, or of Latin, or of German. It is pure humanity.

Calypso is not a woman, but a goddess. She feeds upon ambrosia and nectar, while her maidens spread before Odysseus the food of mortals. Between her and Hermes there is recognition at first sight; for god knows god, however far apart their paths may lie. Yet the love that Calypso bears Odysseus brings this daughter of Atlas down to earth; and we may reckon her among the women of Homer. How mysterious, as the Greek genius apprehended mystery, is her cavern, hidden far away in the isle Ogygia, with the grove of forest-trees before it and the thick vine flourishing around its mouth. Meadows of snowflake and close-flowering selinus gird it round; and on the branches brood all kinds of birds. It is an island such as the Italian painters bring before us in their rarest moments of artistic divination, where the blue green of the twilight mingles with the green blue sea, and the overarching verdure of deep empurpled forest shade. Under those trees, gazing across the ocean, in the still light of the evening star, Odysseus wept for his far distant home. Then, heavy at heart, he gathered up his raiment, and clomb into Calypso's bed at night:

ἐπεὶ οὐκέτι ἦν δαὲν νύμφη.
ἅλλ' ἦτοι νύκτας μὲν λαβέσκεν καὶ ἀνάγκη
ἐν σπέσσι γλαφυροῖσι παρ' οὐκ ἐθέλων ἐθέλουρ.

To him the message of Hermes recalling him to labour on the waves was

joy. But to the nymph herself it brought mere bitterness: "Hard are ye, gods, and envious above all, who grudge that goddesses should couch thus openly with mortal men, if one should make a dear bedfellow for herself. For so the rosy-fingered morning chose Orion, till ye gods that lead an easy life grew jealous, and in Ortygia him the golden-throned maid Artemis slew with her kind arrows." This wail of the immortal nymph Calypso for her roving spouse of seven short years has a strange pathos in it. It seems to pass across the sea like a sigh of winds awakened, none knows how, in summer midnight, that swells and dies far off upon moon-silvered waves. The clear human activity of Odysseus cuts the everlasting calm of Calypso like a knife, shredding the veil that hides her from the eyes of mortals; then he fares onward to resume the toils of real existence in a land whereof she nothing knows. There is a fragment of his last speech to Penelope, which sounds like an echo of Calypso's lamentation. "Death," he says, "shall some day rise for me, tranquil from the tranquil deep, and I shall die in delicate old age." We seem to feel that in his last trance Odysseus might have heard the far-off divine sweet voice of Calypso calling him and have hastened to her cry.

Circe is by no means so mysterious as Calypso. Yet she belongs to one of the most interesting families in Greek romance: her mother was Perse, daughter of Oceanus; her father was Helios; she is own sister therefore to the Colchian Æetes and aunt of the redoubtable Medea. She lives in the isle Ææa, not like Calypso, deep embowered in groves, but in a fair open valley sweeping downward to the sea, whence her hearth-smoke may be clearly descried. Nor is her home an ivy-curtained cavern of the rocks, but a house well-built of polished stone, protected from the sea-winds by oak woods. Here she dwells in grand style, with nymphs of the streams and forests to attend upon her, and herds of wild beasts, human-hearted, roaming through her park. Odysseus always speaks of her with respect as *πρόνια Κίρκη*. . . . *δία θεων*. . . . *Κίρκη ἐμπλόκαμος δειρή θεὸς ἀδρήσασα*. Like Calypso, she has a fair shrill voice that goes across the waters, and as her fingers ply the shuttle, she keeps singing through the summer-air. By virtue of her birthright, as a daughter of the sun, she understands the properties of plant and drug. Poppy and henbane and mandragora, all herbs of subtle juice that draw soul-quelling poison from the fat earth and the burning sun, are hers to use as she thinks fit. And the use she makes of them is malicious; for fairy-like and wanton, she will have the men who visit her across the seas, submit their reason to her lure. Therefore she turns them to swine; and the lions and wolves of the mountain she tames in like manner, so that they fawn and curl their long tails and have no heart to ravin any more. This is how she treats the comrades of Odysseus: "She drew them in and set them on benches and on chairs, and put before them cheese and meat and yellow honey, mixing there-with Pramnian wine: but with the food she mingled baleful drugs, to make them quite forget their fatherland. But when she had given them thereof and they had drunk, straightway she smote them with a rod and shut

them up in styes. Of swine they had the head, the voice, the form, the bristles; but their mind stayed firm as it had been before. So they then were penned up weeping bitter tears; but Circe threw before them acorns of the oak and ilex and cornel-berries, food that the forest swine are wont to eat." What is admirable in this description is its gravity. Circe is not made out particularly wicked or malignant. She is acting only after her kind, like some beautiful but baleful flower—a wreath, for instance, of red briony berries, whereof if children eat, they perish. Nor again is there a touch of the burlesque in the narration. Therefore, in the charming picture which Rivière has painted of Circe, we trace a vein of modern feeling. Claspings her knees with girlish glee, she sits upon the ground beneath a tangle of wild vine, and watches the clumsy hogs that tumble with half-comic, half-pathetic humanity expressed in their pink eyes and grunting snouts before her. So, too, the solemn picture by Burne Jones, a masterpiece of colouring, adds something mediæval to the Homeric Circe. The tall sunflowers that remind us of her father, the cringing leopards, black and lithe, the bending figure of the saffron-vested witch, the jars of potent juices, and the distant glimpse of sea and shore, suggest more of malignant intention than belongs to the πότνια Κίρκη, the Κίρκη πολυφάρμακος of Homer's tale. It was inevitable that modern art should infuse a deeper meaning into the allegory. The world has lived long and suffered much and grown greatly since the age of Homer. We cannot be so naïf and childlike any longer. Yet the true charm of Circe in the *Odyssey*, the spirit that distinguishes her from Tannhäuser's Venus and Orlando's Fata Morgana and Ruggiero's Alcina and Tancred's Armida, lies just in this, that the poet has passed so lightly over all the dark and perilous places of his subject. This delicacy of touch can never be regained by art. It belonged to the conditions of the first Hellenic bloom of fancy, to suggest without insistence and to realize without emphasis. Impatient readers may complain of want of depth and character: they would fain see the Circe of the *Odyssey* as strongly moralized as the Medea of Euripides. But in Homer only what is human attains to real intensity. The marvellous falls off and shades away into soft air tints and delightful dreams. Still it requires the interposition of the gods to save Odysseus from the charms of the malicious maid. As Hermes came to Priam on the path between Troy town and the Achaian ships, so now he meets the hero:

νεότης ἀνδρὶ βουκὼς
πρῶτον βεβήκητ'· τοῦπερ χαριστάτη ἦβη.

A plant of moly is in his hand; and this will be the antidote to Circe's philtre. Odysseus' sword and strong will must do the rest. When Circe has once found her match, we are astonished at the *bonhomie* which she displays. The game is over: there remains nothing but graceful hospitality on her part—elegant banquets, delicious baths, soft beds, the restoration of the ship's crew to their proper shape, and a store of useful advice for the future. "There all the days, for a whole year, we sat feasting and

drinking honeyed wine ; but when the year was full, and the seasons had gone round, moon waning after moon, and the long days were finished, my dear comrades called on me by name, and spake once more of home."

One more female figure from the *Odyssey* remains as yet untouched ; and this is the most beautiful of all. Nausicaa has no legendary charm ; she is neither mystic goddess nor weird woman, nor is hers the dignity of wifehood. She is simply the most perfect maiden, the purest, freshest, lightest-hearted girl of Greek romance. Odysseus passes straight from the solitary island of Ogygia, where elm and poplar and cypress overshadow Calypso's cavern, into the company of this real woman. It is like coming from a land of dreams into a dewy garden when the sun has risen : the waves through which he has fared upon his raft have wrought for him, as it were, a rough re-incarnation into the realities of human life. For the sea brine is the source of vigour ; and into the waves he has cast, together with Calypso's raiment, all memory of her.

Nausicaa was asleep in her Phæacian chamber when Athene, mindful of Odysseus' need, came down and warned her in a dream that she should bestir herself and wash her clothes against her marriage day. When the damsel woke she went straight to her father, Alcinous, and begged him to provide a horse and mules. Like a prudent girl, she said nothing of her marriage, but spoke of the cares of the household. Her five brothers, she said, the two wedded and the other three in the bloom of youth, want shining raiment for the dance, and her duty it is to see that the clothes are always ready. Alcinous knew in his heart what she really meant, but he answered her with no unseemly jest. Only he promised a cart and a pair of mules ; and her mother gave her food to eat, and wine in a skin, and a golden cruse of oil, that she and her maidens might spend a pleasant morning by the sea beach, and bathe and anoint themselves, when their clothes-washing was finished.

A prettier picture cannot be conceived than that drawn by Homer of Nausicaa, with her handmaidens thronging together in the cart, which jogs downward through the olive-gardens to the sea. The princess holds the whip and drives ; and when she reaches the stream's mouth by the beach, she loosens the mules from the shafts and turns them out to graze in the deep meadow. Then the clothes are washed, and the luncheon is taken from the basket, and the game of ball begins. How the ball flew aside and fell into the water, and how the shrill cries of the damsels woke Odysseus from his sleep, every one remembers. The girls are fluttered by the sight of the great naked man, rugged with brine and bruised with shipwreck. Nausicaa alone, as becomes a princess, stands her ground and questions him. The simple delicacy with which this situation is treated, makes the whole episode one of the most charming in Homer. Nothing can be prettier than the change from pity to admiration, expressed by the damsel, when Odysseus has bathed in running water and rubbed himself with oil and put on goodly raiment given him by her girls. Pallas sheds treble grace upon his form, and

makes his hair to fall in clusters like hyacinth-blossoms, so that an artist who moulds figures of gilt silver, could not shape a comelier statue. The princess, with yesternight's dream still in her soul, wishes he would stay and be her husband. The girlish simplicity of Nausicaa is all the more attractive because the Phæacians are the most luxurious race described by Homer. The palace in which she dwells with her father is all of bronze and silver and gold; it shines like the sun, and a blue line marks the brazen cornice of the walls. Dogs of silver and gold, Hephaistos' work, which never can grow old through length of days, protect the entrance. Richly-woven robes are cast upon the couches in the hall, and light is shed upon the banquet-tables from blazing torches in the hands of golden boys. Outside the palace grows the garden; with well-divided orchard rows, where pears and figs and pomegranates and burnished apples and olives flourish all year long. The seasons change not in Phæacian land for winter or for summer. Zephyrus is always blowing. Pear follows after pear, and apple after apple, and grape bunch after grape bunch, in a never-ending autumn dance. Vintage, too, is there; and there are the trim flower-beds; and through the garden flow two fountains. The whole pleasure-ground seems to have been laid out with geometrical Greek taste. It is a Paradise of neatness, sunbright, clear to take in at a glance. In this delightful palace dwells Alcinous, a kind old man, among his sons; and much delight they take in dance and song and games of strength. The young men, whose beards are but just growing, leap in rhythmic movement to the flute; the elder and more muscular run or wrestle, and much contempt do these goodly fellows, like English lads, reserve for men who are not athletes. Odysseus has to rebuke one of them, Euryalus, by reminding him that faultlessly fair bodies are not always the temples of a godlike soul; Zeus gives not all of his good gifts to all; for some men owe grace and favour to eloquence, others to beauty, and a man may be like to the immortal in face and form, and yet a fool. Alcinous well describes the temper of his people when he says: "We are not faultless boxers, nor yet wrestlers; but with our feet we race swiftly, and none can beat us in rowing; and we aye love the banquet, and the lyre, and dancing, and gay raiment, and warm baths, and joys of love." It is therefore not without propriety that Demodocus, their blind bard, "whom the Muse loved much, and gave him good and evil; for she reft him of his sight and gave him honeyed song," sings of Aphrodite tangled with Ares in the net of Hephaistos. From this soft, luxurious, comely, pleasure-loving folk Nausicaa springs up like a pure blossom, anemone or lily of the mountains. She has all the sweetness of temper which distinguishes Alcinous; but the voluptuous living of her people has not spoiled her. The maidenly reserve which she displays in her first reception of Odysseus, her prudent avoidance of being seen with him in the streets of the town while he is yet a stranger, and the care she takes that he shall suffer nothing by not coming with her to the palace, complete the portrait of a girl who is as free from coquetry as she is from prudishness. Perhaps she strikes our fancy with most clearness when, after bathing and dressing,

Odysseus passes her on his way through the hall to the banquet. She leaned against the pillar of the roof and gazed upon Odysseus, and said : "Hail, guest, and be thou mindful of me when perchance thou art in thine own land again, for to me the first thou dost owe the price of life." This is the last word spoken by Nausicaa in the *Odyssey*. She is not mentioned among the Phæacians who took leave of the hero the day he passed to Ithaca.

Before quitting the women of Homer, we must return to the *Iliad*; for without Briseis and Andromache their company would be incomplete. As the figures in a bas-relief are variously wrought, some projecting like independent statues in sharp light and shadow, while others are but half detached, and a third sort offer mere outlined profiles scarcely embossed upon the marble background; even so the poet has obeyed a law of relative proportion in his treatment of character. The subordinate heroes, for example, in the *Iliad* fall away from the central figure of Achilles into more or less of slightness. This does not mean that we can trace the least indecision in Homer's touch, or that he has slurred his work by haste or incapacity. On the contrary, there is no poet from whom deeper lessons in the art of subordinating accessories to the main subject without impairing their real value, can be learned. A sculptor like Pheidias knows how to give significance to the least indication of a form which he has placed upon the second plane in his bas-relief. Just so Homer inspires his minor characters with personality. To detach this personality in each case is the task of the critic; yet his labour is no light one; for the Homeric characters draw their life from incidents, motives, action. To the singer's fancy they appeared, not as products of the self-conscious imagination, but as living creatures; and to separate them from their environment of circumstance is almost to destroy them. This is the specific beauty of the art of Homer. In its origin it must have been the outcome, not of reflection, but of inspired instinct; for in the Homeric age, psychological analysis was unknown, and the very nomenclature of criticism had yet to be invented. We can draw inexhaustible lessons in practical wisdom from the Homeric poems; but we cannot with impunity subject those delicate creations to the critical crucible. They delight both intellect and senses with a many-toned harmony of exquisitely modulated parts; but the instant we begin to dissect and theorize, we run a risk of attributing far more method and deliberation than was natural to a poet in the early age of Hellas. It is almost impossible to set forth the persons of Homer except in his own way, and in close connection with the incidents through which they are revealed; whereas the characters of a more self-conscious artist, the Medea, for example, or the Phædra of Euripides, can be described without much repetition of their speeches or reconstruction of the dramas in which they play their parts.

Andromache offers a not inapt illustration to these remarks. She is beautiful, as all heroic women are; and Homer tells us she is "white-armed." We know no more about her person than this; and her character is exhibited only in the famous parting scene and in the two lamenta-

tions which she pours forth for her husband. Yet who has read the *Iliad* without carrying away a distinct conception of this, the most lovable among the women of Homer? She owes her character far less to what she does and what she says, than to how she looks in that ideal picture painted on our memory by Homer's verse. The affection of Hector for his wife, no less distinguished than the passion of Achilles for his friend, has made the Trojan prince rather than his Greek rival the hero of modern romance. When he leaves Ilion to enter on the long combat which ends in the death of Patroclus, the last thought of Hector is for Andromache. He finds her, not in their home, but on the wall, attended by her nurse, who carries in her arms his only son :

Ἑκτορίδην ἀγαπητὸν ἀλγικιον ἀστέρι καλῶ.

Her first words, after she has wept and clasped him, are : " Love, thy stout heart will be thy death, nor hast thou pity of thy child or me, who soon shall be a widow. My father and my mother and my brothers are all slain : but, Hector, thou art father to me and mother and brother, and thou too art the husband of my youth. Have pity then, and stay here in the tower, lest thy son be orphaned and thy wife a widow." The answer is worthy of the hero. " Full well," he says, " know I that Troy will fall, and I foresee the sorrow of my brethren and the king : but for these I grieve not : to think of thee, a slave in Argos, unmans me almost ; yet even so I will not flinch or shirk the fight. My duty calls, and I must away." He stretches out his mailed arms to Astyanax ; but the child is frightened by his nodding plumes. So he lays aside his helmet, and takes the baby to his breast and prays for him. Andromache smiles through her tears, and down the clanging causeway strides the prince. Poor Andromache has nothing left to do, but to return home and raise the dirge for a husband as good as dead. When we see her again in the 22nd *Iliad* she is weaving, and her damsels are heating a bath against Hector's return from the fight. Then suddenly the cry of Hecuba's anguish thrills her ears. Shuttle and thread drop from her hands ; she gathers up her skirts, and like a Mænad flies forth to the wall. She arrives in time to see her husband's body dragged through dust at Achilles' chariot-wheels away from Troy. She faints, and when she wakes, it is to utter the most piteous lament in Homer, not, however, for Hector so much, or for herself, as for Astyanax. He who was reared upon a father's knees and fed with marrow and the fat of lambs, and when play tired him slept in soft beds among nursing-women, will now roam, an orphan, wronged and unbefriended, hunted from the company of happier men, or fed by charity with scanty scraps. The picture of an orphan's misery among cold friends and hard oppressors is wrought with the pathos of exquisite simplicity. And to the same theme Andromache returns in the *rocero* which she pours forth over the body of Hector. " I shall be a widow and a slave, and Astyanax will either be slaughtered by Greek soldiers or set to base service in like bondage." Then the sight of the

corpse reminds her that the last words of her sorrow must be paid to Hector himself. What touches her most deeply is the thought of death in battle:—

οὐ γὰρ μοι θνήσκων ληχέων ἐκ χεῖρας ὄρεξας
οὐδέ τί μοι εἶπες πυκινὸν ἔπος, οὐδέ κεν αἰεὶ
μεμνήμην νύκτας τε καὶ ἡμέματα δακρυχέουσα.

As far as studied delineation of character goes, Briseis is still more a silhouette than Andromache. We know her as the fair-cheeked damsel who was fain to stay with Achilles, and who loved Patroclus because he kept for her a soothing word. In her *threnos* for Patroclus she exclaims, "how one woe after another takes me! I saw my husband slain before our city, and my three brethren; but you, Patroclus, then comforted me, and said I should be Achilles' wife: you were ever gentle." This is really all we know about her. Yet Briseis lives in our memory by virtue of the great passions gathered round her, and the weighty actions in which she plays her part.

In course of years the heroes of the Homeric romances came to be worshipped, not exactly like gods with *θεοίαι*, but like the more than mortal dead with *ἐναγίσματα*. They had their chapels and their hearths, distinct from the temples and the altars of the deities. These were generally raised upon the supposed spot of their sepulture, or in places which owed them special reverence as *akists* or as ancestors. In the case of Ædipus the translation of the hero to the company of gods secured for him a cultus in Colonos. It was supposed that heroes exercised a kindly influence over the people among whom they dwelt; haunting the neighbourhood in semi-corporeal visitations, conferring benefits upon the folk, and exhibiting signs of anger when neglected. Thus Philostratus remarks that Protesilaus had a fane in Thessaly, "and many humane and favourable dealings doth he show the men of Thessaly, yea, and angerly also if he be neglected." * The same Philostratus, whose works are a treasure-house of information respecting the latest forms of Hellenic Paganism, reports the actual form of prayer used by Apollonius of Tyana at the tomb of Palamedes, † and makes the ghost of Achilles complain: "The Thessalians for a long time have remitted my offerings; still I am not yet minded to display my wrath against them." Achilles, who has been evoked above his tomb in the Troad by the prayers of Apollonius, proceeds to remark that even the Trojans revere him more than his own people, but that he cannot restore the town of Troy to its old prosperity. He hints, however, pretty broadly, that, if the Thessalians do not pay him more attention, he will reduce them to the same state of misery as the Trojans. The *dæmon*, it may be said in passing, vanishes, like a mediæval ghost, at cockcrow. ‡

This cultus of the Homeric heroes was of course inseparable from a corresponding growth of artistic associations; and here it is not a little curious to compare our own indefinite conceptions of the outward form of the heroic personages with the very concrete incarnation they received

* *Ἡρωϊκός*, 680.

† *Life of Apollonius*, 150.

‡ *Ibid.* 153, 154.

from Greek sculptors and painters. The first memorable attempt to express the heroes of Homer in marble was upon the pediment at Egina; the first elaborate pictorial representation was that of Polygnotus on the walls of the *Lesche* at Delphi. A Greek *Lesche* was not unlike an Italian or Oriental café, extended to suffice for the requirements of a whole city. What has been discovered at Pompeii, in addition to the full description of the Delphian *Lesche* by Pausanias, inclines us to believe that the walls of these public places of resort were not unfrequently decorated with Homeric pictures. The beautiful frescoes of Achilles among the daughters of Lycomedes, of Achilles bathed by Thetis in the Styx, of Briseis led forth by Patroclus into the company of the Achaian chiefs, and of Penelope questioning the disguised Odysseus about her husband, which have been discovered in various parts of Pompeii, sufficiently illustrate to modern minds the style of this wall-painting. The treatise surnamed *Eikônes* of Philostratus is an elaborate critical catalogue of a picture-gallery of this sort; and from many indications contained in it we learn how thoroughly the heroes of Homer had acquired a fixed corporeal personality. In describing, for example, a picture of the lamentation for Antilochus, he says: "These things are Homer's paintings, but the painter's action." Then he goes on to point out the chief persons: "You can distinguish Odysseus at once by his severe and wideawake appearance, Menelaus by his gentleness, Agamemnon by his inspired look; while Tydeus is indicated by his freedom, the Telamonian Ajax by his grimness, and the Locrian by his activity." * In another place he tells us that Patroclus was of an olive-pale complexion (*μελιχλωρός*), with black eyes and rather thick eyebrows; his head was erect upon the neck, like that of a man who excels in athletic exercises, his nose straight, with wide nostrils, like an eager horse. These descriptions occur in the *Heroic Dialogue*. They are supposed to have been communicated by the daemon, Protesilaus, to a vine-dresser who frequented his tomb. Achilles, on the other hand, had abundant hair, more pleasant to the sight in hue than gold, with a nose inclining to the aquiline, angry brows, and eyes so bright and lively that the soul seemed leaping from them in fire. Hector again had a terrible look about him, and scorned to dress his hair, and his ears were crushed, not indeed by wrestling, for barbarians do not wrestle, but by the habit of struggling for mastery with wild bulls.†

Some of the women of Homeric story, Helen for example, and Iphigenia, received divine honours, together with suitable artistic personification. But women were not closely connected with the genealogical and gentle foundations of the Greek cultus; only a few, therefore, were thus distinguished. What has here been said about the superstition that gave form and distinctness to the creatures of Homeric fancy, may be taken as

* *Eikônes*, 820.

† *Ἡρωϊκός*, 736, 733, 722. For the curious detail about Hector's ears compare Theocr. 22, 45, where athletes are described *τεθλαγμένοι ὄβαρα πυγμαῖς*. Statues of Hercules show this.

applying in general to the attitude assumed by ancient art. The persons of a poem or a mythus were not subjected to critical analysis as we dissect the characters of *Hamlet* or of *Faust*. But they were not on that account the less vividly apprehended. They tended more and more to become external realities, beings with a definite form and a fixed character. In a word, through sculpture, painting, and superstition, they underwent the same personifying process as the saints of mediæval Italy. To what extent the Attic drama exercised a disturbing influence and interrupted this process, has been touched upon with reference to the Euripidean Helen.

J. A. S.

NOTE.—Translations to the passages quoted above from Homer are placed here, so as not to interrupt the reader who may not require them.

"The home of my wedded years, exceeding fair, filled with all the goods of life, which even in dreams methinks I shall remember," p. 52.

"I know well that Penelope is inferior to thee in form and stature, to the eyes of men," p. 54.

"Of a truth my goodness and beauty of person the gods destroyed what time the Greeks went up to Troy," p. 54.

"For the nymph pleased him no longer. Nathless, as need was, he slept the night in hollow caverns beside her, loving him who loved her not," p. 54.

"Like to a young man when his beard has just begun to grow, whose bloom is then most lovely," p. 56.

"Hector's only son, like unto a fair star," p. 60.

"For dying thou didst not reach to me thy hand from the bed, or say to me words of wisdom, the which I might have aye remembered night and day with tears," p. 61.

Horace's Two Philosophies.

FORMALLY to put Horace forward as an ethical teacher, would be to set people laughing in every tongue into which the works have been translated. His poetry, in spite of its many grave passages, has always been looked on as a gospel of gaiety which men of the world needed no urging to read. The Odes especially make a conspicuous portion of that light scripture which circulates sufficiently without colporteurs. It is true that scarcely any other writer says such sad things, and very few offer so many wise ones, still he keeps a character for perfect lightness. How is this? It is a puzzle for which there must be an explanation. The answer we believe is, that Horace instinctively adopts as his working principle the mere availability of literary interest in his topic. If that is great, so is the freedom of his work; if it be small, so soon as it exhausts he stops. Even his graver philosophy arrests itself, from moment to moment, on touching these verbal limits, as if the gossamer threads of criticism were made of steel. In the literary conscience, a higher duty than that of teaching morals is not to bore. If Horace thinks the danger of that is near, he instantly jokes, ending his preaching in a witticism. This accounts for his having made men so very little better by his wisdom, and so much less worse than might have been expected by his folly. The impression he has left upon the world, in fact, is neither effectively philosophical nor erotic; it is simply literary. The ever-recurring impulse, which in the lyrical compositions fully triumphs over every other, is to make men glad with the wonder of new language, momentarily intoxicating himself and them with the sweetness of perfectly-matched phrases. As a poet, he was as wise as this would let him be, and as wicked as it required.

Let us apply this test to the Odes. It seems to us impossible, on any other principle, to understand their mock-philosophy of delight. These poems have fascinated fifty generations. No one can wonder at it. They give a perfect lyrical expression to certain ideal moods of holiday feeling, which all men wish to believe in, and which Horace pretends more adequately than anybody else. In the first Ode is struck the note of this idle gaiety, so welcome to men's secret hearts,—

me gelidum nemus,
Nympharumque leves cum satyris chori,
Secernunt populo; si neque tibus
Euterpe cohibet, nec Polyhymnia
Lesboun refugit tendere barbiton.

Far from the crowd, the cooling grove I choose,
 And nymphs with satyrs mixed in tripping ring,
 If but her flute Euterpe not refuse,
 Nor Polyhymnia the Lesbian string.

This is the earliest glimpse the reader gets of Horace. The poem itself is a fine catalogue of the different modes of enjoyment, but it is clear that, besides the above, only one other of the pictures is quite trivial enough for Horace's pretended approval. It is that given in the lines,—

Est qui nec veteris pocula Massici,
 Nec partem solido demere de die
 Spernit : nunc viridi membra sub arbuto
 Stratus, nunc ad aquæ lenæ caput sacræ.

One who disdains not the ripe Massic's aid,
 But stretches now, e'en at the fullest noon,
 Beneath the arbutus in cooling shade,
 Now where the haunted streamlet hums its tune.

Very soon within this trivial paradise appears its fitting Eve. Ode V. opens with the lyric burst,—

Quis multâ gracilis te puer in rosâ,
 Perfusus liquidis urget odoribus
 Grato, Pyrrha, sub antro ?
 Cui flavam religas comam
 Simplex munditiis ? Heu, quoties fidem,
 Mutatosque Deos, &c.

What slender youth amid a world of roses,
 In perfumes steeped from liquids got,
 Thee, Pyrrha, now within his arms encloses,
 Hidden in some kind shelt'ring grot ?
 For whom now tiest (for him as he supposes !)
 Thy yellow hair in neatest knot ?
 Alas, how oft, &c.

This is the light world into which the reader of the Odes passes. In the chief pieces, those which give the special tone to the poetry, he never quits it. All is triviality, but with a sufficient forecast of sour old age and possible care to justify it, and to give to it, in a vain self-pity, a wonderful heightening of elegant melancholy. Horace can make no claim for inventing this gay sphere ; all the lyric poets have found it just as ready made to their hands as this world is. His merit is that he alone has made its old incredibilities nearly believable. As he goes on, he so peoples it with real persons, so mixes it up with actual places, so weaves in historic events and dates, that there is no distinguishing ; men have had to accept the whole of the impossible festive life as true. He has positively localized the poetic realms. His Sabine farm, the pine-tree overlooking his cottage, most certainly the flashing Bandusian fountain, were somehow in this fairy-land of pleasure ; so were some parts, though we do not quite know which, of the breezy Tibur valley ; several of the white sloping villas of his friends

juttet into it; it included some real caves, some brooks, some groves. Mæcenas, Virgil, Augustus, Faunus, Bacchus, Jove, are mentioned in just the same way; nymphs, satyrs, and human personages shiningly move among one another. In a word, in the Odes literature is inextricably mixed with actual life, and the charm of it is marvellous, is irresistible. It is just what everybody has always been hoping might come true. But this happily courageous trick of confusing the limits of reality would not of itself be sufficient to give to Horace's poetical mirth all the unique solidity it has. He can produce that only by industry, by an unceasing detailed exercise of his art. Horace's delusion of the reader is, indeed, built up most laboriously. Earlier, we spoke of a mock philosophy. It is there for any one to see in the Odes just as distinctly as the real one of the Epistles and the Satires. He feigned a counterfeit system of morals of delight, exactly dispensing from all seriousness, founding its idle obligations on the very vainest of joys; the only duty put forward is pleasure: a wise hurry in indulgence while youth lasts stands for virtue. Prudence is simply reversed, turns into systematic recklessness; because of the future one must snatch at the present. An inverted conscience is framed, giving an ethical dignity to our foolish wishes, enforcing vanity by an exquisite mimicry of large reasoning. Successive generations of youth draw their breath in soft amazement over the pages. For by this second unbelievable audacity Horace gets the full literary enlargement of every forbidden verbal sweetness of wrong advice. It is this unexpected relaxation of all stress of conscience, as well as subjugation of the fancy of men by mixing up reality, that makes Horace so entirely fascinating, so perfectly holiday in his special effects. But some specimens had better be given of his philosophy of folly.

The self-pitying sadness which supplies all the artful heightening of woe to joy is brought in as early as the fourth Ode of the First Book. After a very rhetorical description of the return of spring, and of the festivities due to it, he suddenly speaks of pale death as knocking at the cottages of the poor and the towers of kings. These last lines have got Christianized by use. They now seem to enforce a solemnity of thought in the way of a proved need for all to prepare for death. Horace uses them for a very different purpose. This is how he follows them up:—

O beate Sexti,

Vite summa brevis spem nos vetat inchoare longam.

Jam te premet nox, fabulæque manes,

Et domus exilis Plutonia : quò simul meâris,

Nec regna vini sortiere talis ;

Nec tenerum Lycidam mirabere, quo calet juventus

Nunc omnis, et mox virgines tepebunt.

Oh, Sextius, happy now ! This life's short space

Forbids all far-off hope, soon will dark night

Plunge thee amid the shades, the exile's place,

Pluto's sad home ; and, once it meets thy sight,

Never again as monarch of the wine
 Wilt thou be chosen by the dice's throw,
 Nor see young Lycidas in beauty shine,
 For whom now youths, but soon the girls will glow.

A little later, Ode XI., B. I., the bacchanal logic is completed. Addressing Leuconœ, he jocosely trolls forth,—

Seu plures hyemes, seu tribuit Jupiter ultimam,
 Quæ nunc oppositis debilitat pumicibus mare
 Tyrrhenum, sapias : vina liques, et spatio brevi
 Spem longam reseces : dum loquimur fugerit invida
 Ætas : carpe diem, quam minimùm credula postero.

No matter whether Jove will give us many winters more,
 Or this the last that wears the rocks now on the Tyrrhene shore,
 Like wise men let us strain the wine, and equal make the day
 To weeks of hope, for, while we speak, Time envious flies away.
 This moment snatch who would know joy, nor give a thought to sorrow,
 For fools are they who make delay, and reckon on to-morrow.

But he reasons out in a more particular way than this the wisdom of instantly using every good which fortune places for a brief hour in your reach. This is how, in Ode III., B. II., he urges his friend, Quintus Dellius,—

Cedes cœmtis saltibus, et domo,
 Villæque, flavus quam Tiberis lavit,
 Cedes ; et extractis in altum
 Divitiis potietur hæres.
 Divesne, prisco natus ab Inacho,
 Nil interest, an pauper, et infimâ
 De gente sub dio moreris,
 Victima nil miserantis Orci.
 Omnes, &c.

You must quit,—tis all your heir's,—
 House amid the new-bought woods,
 Villa washed by Tiber's floods,
 Wealth piled with so many cares.
 You must quit, it matters not,
 If from old Inachus born,
 Or if living most forlorn,
 Pity's not from Orcus got.
 It is our fate,
 Or soon or late.

In Ode XIV. of the same Book, he pushes this very effective argument about the heir to the full, by suggesting that your successor may waste your much prized stores if you don't consume them yourself,—

Absumet hæres Cæcuba dignior,
 Servata centum clavibus ; et mero
 Tinget pavimentum superbum,
 Pontificum potiore cœnis.

Your worthier heir the wines of richest sort,
 Now guarded by a hundred keys,
 May waste; may stain the floor with "Comet" port,
 That would Archbishop's palate please.

Omitting a score of passages heavy with the air of roses and lilies, where he calls for garlands of parsley, ivy, myrtle, and asks who will quickest cool the wine in the passing brook, we come, finally, to one certainty. It is given in Ode XXIX., B. III. :—

Ille potens sui
 Lætasque deget, cui licet, in diem,
 Dixisse: Vixi; cras vel atrâ
 Nube polum pater occupato,
 Vel sole puro; non tamen irritum
 Quodcumque retro est, efficiet: neque
 Diffinget, infectumque reddet,
 Quod fugiens semel hora vexit.

He his own master is, and surely gay,
 To whom each night it is allowed to say,—
 I've lived! I've lived to-day!
 The sire to-morrow may make dark or bright,
 He has no power o'er what has taken flight,
 Past joy is past all spite.
 The pleasures had in hours now backward run
 Cannot by Jove himself e'er be undone,
 That joy at least is won.

This is the philosophy of the Odes. If the matter had to be taken seriously, we should have to say that it is a systematisation of our bad thoughts, our vetoed feelings, our vainest wishes. In reality it is a perfectly constructed apparatus for displaying the literary interest of life to the full. They are lyrical ethics, and nothing more. To the first readers, the poems must have had a fine preposterousness of reasoning appeal to them to be more dissipated; it would constitute a subtler kind of humour than any shown in our rough modern jocularly, which has no philosophical assumptions to refine it. The very position Horæe took up was a piece of standing wit. He is the apostle of freer living. The same modes by which others urge men to virtue he uses to drive them to pleasure. He is for ever calling out to everybody to enjoy themselves more. Nobody is ready enough to plunge into delights. All his friends, from Mæcenas downwards, are wasting their time in acquiring learning, in winning world-wide victories, in caring for Rome and managing public affairs, in gaining fortunes. He invites them, he adjures them, he coaxes them to turn to better things. If they let an hour pass without its revel, they will repent it; but the repentance will be too late, for old age will be upon them, if death itself tarries. They will have wasted their youth. The most superfluously wicked advice ever given to the juveniles is that he strenuously offers to Thaliarchus in Ode IX. of the First Book :—

Nec dulces amores
 Sperne, puer, neque tu choreas ;
 Donec virenti canities abest
 Morosa. Nunc et campus, et area,
 Lenesque sub noctem susurri
 Compositâ repetantur horâ.
 Nunc et latentis proditor intimo
 Gratus pnellæ risus ab angulo
 Pignusque direptum lacertis,
 Aut digito malè pertinaci.

Shun not, O youth, sweet loves, nor dances light,
 While sour old age as yet thy glory spares,
 Nor soils it with grey hairs.
 Now is the time, hid by the gentle night,
 To keep the meeting in the park or squares,
 In softly-whispering pairs.

And if the teasing girl herself should hide,
 From a deep corner, laughter twittering clear
 Betrays that she is near.
 From arm or finger snatch, though half-denied,
 Some pledge or token for a forfeit dear,
 Nor heed her feigned fear.

Moreover, Horace removes it all from the realm of mere rhetorical insincerity by backing it up with a pretended example. He represents himself as carrying out all he preaches. Eighteen of the Odes are invitations to as many banquets. There is consistency in every respect. From first to last, he betrays not the slightest misgiving of the easiness of attaining joy, if you only have the wisdom not to put it off till youth is past ; nor is there to be detected the faintest doubt of the sufficiency of delight, if you do but fully give yourself up to it. Accordingly nothing is too slight a pretext for a banquet. If Soracte stands white with its depth of snow, and the rivers are fast with ice, he advises a feast around the hearth (Ode IX., B. I.) ; if winter is gone and the spring arrived, now is the time, he says, for garlanding the head with myrtle green, for bringing forth the stored wine, and joining in the dance—(Ode IV., B. I.) Any change in the weather, even the prospect of a storm the next day, calls for preparations for festivities—(Ode XVII., B. III.) The only difference is indoors or outdoors. He has a careful prudence in this matter of pleasure, he takes pains about it, shows foresight. When anything agreeable happens to himself, he sets up a jar of wine, to be broken into by-and-by as a memorial—(Ode XX., B. I.) If he escapes from danger,—a falling tree,—he makes the date an anniversary for a banquet—(Ode VIII., B. III.) He keeps the gala days of others as well as his own—(Ode XI., B. IV.) His one ever present, only excusable care is to get an adequate calendar of private holidays. We said nothing was too slight to be a justification for festivity, so no event is too solemn for it. Does Augustus return from Spain, Horace asks for perfumes and a cask which recollects the Marsian war—(Ode XIV., B. III.) When Cæsar conquers at Actium, and

Cleopatra flies to die in Egypt, then he declares it is no longer a sin to bring out the treasured Cæcuban—(Ode XXXVII., B. I.) The final verification of this faith in delight set forth in the Odes is furnished in the fact, that, if anything unpropitious happens, he still only has enjoyment to recommend. To Valgius, sorrowing for his son Mystes, he advises rejoicing for the new-won victories—(Ode IX., B. II.) It is a full, a perfect, a shining consistency. In no other way could the impression of solidity in the impossible gaiety be got. For the poetic spells, though there is no magic like them, are only of very momentary potency; the wizard must weave them continuously to produce any large enchantment. The feeling of reality is never assured till we are so entangled in agreement that there is no escape.

Fortunately this marvellous bewitching of all true reason, of all right principle, for the sake of the enlargement of a musical utterance, rises to such a perfected pitch, that the only sin possible in such a world as the Odes picture would be that most culpable one of slackness in momentary enjoyment. It is a transgression which no living man feels guilty of, and so far as our conscience works at all in reference to the Horatian personages, if we could see this crime in them, which we really cannot do, we should most likely, out of sheer bewilderment, let the blame be swallowed up in pity before the common feelings could get fully astir. The poor creatures did not sin rightly or not sufficiently! But if the wrongness had not been perfected into harmlessness in this thorough way, there is a part of Horace which posterity would have had to hush up. Nobody would have been able to say anything in detail of his women. Of all poetry capable of dispensing perfectly with grossness, finding a more striking substitute in speaking innocently of sin, his love pieces ought to be the most immoral singing in the world. Yet somehow no one seems to feel much ashamed for him for the looseness. The country parsons, who, after reading in the Greek Testament, turn to his pages, and come upon the dialogue with Lydia, or the apostrophe to perjured Barine, only gently shake their heads. It is a naughtiness so liberal, so open to the sun and air, that the fever of it is three-parts blown away. The full publicity of it all leaves little relevancy to our feelings; in style it is really one with our virtue. Astonishment substitutes any more formal judgment of it. This is lucky, for, if it were needed to say it, every one of the fair frail beauties he sings of is a glittering scandal, made unbanishable from men's remembrance by the beauty of the words in which the partly fictitious shame is spoken. It should be stated that he does not dwell upon the topic specially: he only treats of woman as a necessary feature in his trivial philosophy. Directly we will try to point out how small a space the erotic poetry actually fills; and out of this small quantity, only a part relates to his own affairs, for he craftily makes as much of his friends' love matters as of his own. But the wholly incommensurate degree of the success is so wonderful an instance of his art, that something must be particularly said of it. It gives a distinct opportunity

of seeing Horace's method of work, showing how the exquisite lightness of effect is, in reality, most carefully laboured, the apparent casualty being unceasingly preconceived.

Let it be borne in mind how miserably narrow a presentation of woman it necessarily is. In this world of trivial gaiety, he cannot have anything to do with real love, as that is too mixed, too serious; all the domestic relationships and incidents must be left out of his scenes; there can be no praise of constancy in the past, no hope of it in the future. A brief moment of garish harlotry, with only the stupidly shallow sameness of perpetual change of person to give variety, is all the limit he has. Notice what he makes of it, simply by sheer workmanship. Dissolute wit not being open to him, he ought very soon to have become dull, as all the erotic poets who have a stickling for verbal decency do. Horace, though he speaks of woman only in this lowest, most trivial, least diversified aspect, not merely avoids all monotony; he gives the impression of inexhaustible incident. The first stroke of this economy consists in making a woman, wherever she is brought in, give the full distinct impression of sex. The number of writers is increasing, with whom it does not signify whether much of what is said by the characters is put in the mouth of a man or a woman, nor whether this or that act is done by the hero or the heroine. Horace knows nothing of this neuter style. With him the sexes are always instantly in conscious presence of one another, whenever they are on the scene at all. Indeed, he avails himself of this natural opposition of the two, recognisable by everybody, to dispense him from all the tediousness of love-making, which bulks so largely in modern literature. Within Horace's limits it never could have been made interesting enough. Accordingly, all that is taken for granted; the personages are already at an understanding beyond that superfluous stage. Matters are interesting from the very first moment—they start with wickedness. Another resource of thrift is availed of. He adopts the traditional type of the sex at its easiest readiness. Every one of the women is fickle, hypocritical. This does more than give the reader no intellectual stress. The very fact of a charmer of this low kind having recently been faithless, or else being about to be so, throws the glitter of a large effectiveness upon her beauty. She is made interesting, and she is kept so; for the position is always critical. Through this opening he gets his multiplication of events, since he sings not so much of love as of jealousy, mutual confessions of inconstancy, reawakenings of liking, rivalry, reconciliation. Every variation of fortune in this transient association of the sexes possible within the limits of a free light comedy, he avails himself of. Turn where you will a cunning effectiveness meets you. An impression is given of a crowd of women peopling the Odes beyond the number of those specified by name, though that is not small. It is largely owing to their being of all ages; a half-tumultuous mixing of unripe girls, women in their bloom, some soon to pass it, one or two hags; each, in a different way, illustrating a historic phase of the gay wickedness, and together filling the Horatian

world with it. He secures an air of hard reality for the sinful lightness by representing the sex not as dolls, not as idle deceitful sirens; they are tyrants of fierce temper, from whom escape can alone come by a tiring of their charms.

But besides these general artifices, any one who will look closely will detect a still grosser determination to exhaust the interest of the subject to the dregs. In the bulk of the cases, a shameless heightening of the excitement is contrived by a third party being brought into these privacies. Either Horace is telling some one of his loves, or he is brazenly asking them about theirs: in some way a representative public is provided to make the affair open and scandalous. It is true that their society differed from ours in these matters; but reticence in its least degree is not wholly a modern invention, and Horace puts even that least degree aside, as being anti-literary. He further invents highly ingenious situations outside all direct experience, in order to put the subject through its hypothetical aspects, getting incredible provocations of novelty. Thus, in one Ode he pretends to sympathise with Asterie over the absence of her lover, gone a journey. His real object is to get an opportunity of giving a fresh side-view of the topic by recounting how Gyges most likely is then being tempted by his smitten landlady, and he finishes by supposing Asterie's own frailty, fearing that she will fall though Gyges does not, advising her to shut the house at dusk against her irresistible neighbour, blooming young Enipeus, whose manly beauty he praises as a pander might do. This is not love-poetry in any simple lyric sense, any more than is his recounting to Lydia elsewhere the details of the growing effeminacy of Sybaris, fascinated by her charms. It is the artful using of the literary interest of a great stock subject. One of his commonest tricks is to bring in, by whatever means, two women. We omit the citations, but he pushes it to the incredible extent of telling a mother that she is eclipsed in sinful charms by her daughter. All these minor arts are neither more nor less than so many carefully used ways of making the wickedness a trifle more wicked.

Finally, he economically gathers up every particle of interest remaining by feigning coolly to reason about love. Anything which could not be given in any other way, he gives in that way. He proves to some male friend that Lalage is yet too young not to be afraid of a lover; with Chloe, on the contrary, he, on behalf of himself, reasons that it is time for her to quit her mother's leading-strings; he argues with Lyce, that it is not likely he shall for ever lie waiting at her unopened door. When Albius Tibullus grieves at being jilted by Glycera, he demonstrates from other cases that it is the general course of love. The old amazement of the philosophy of the thing is thus again brought in. It may not be quite easy, even when it is pointed out, for everybody to see this patient skilful use of literary technicalities; he hides them in roses, softly hushes them up in music, makes the diction bright enough to dazzle. But anybody, surely, by opening their eyes, can perceive how he makes the apparently random snatches from his own experience give a complete history of the passion.

Casual and disjointed as these bursts seem, it will be found on looking closely that not one possible mood is omitted from them. He is only mildly in love with Phyllis, for splendid Glycera he burns; Phryne holds him in bondage, in spite of her unfaithfulness, and Myrtale keeps him fast, though she terrifies him with her temper; in the case of Lydia, he tells her how he rages with jealousy; but when Pyrrha has jilted him, he lightly consoles himself with joking about the future surprise of his rival when his turn to be displaced comes; he makes it up with Lydia, amid droll confessions of mutual inconstancy. In all this ostentatious frankness, he asks for comical sympathies, pretending to be a veteran. He is a victim, not only to the women, but to the passion itself. Again and again he struggles against it: he implores Venus to turn to younger men; sometimes he conquers her rule, but he has relapses. There come victories late in life, as well as his youthful ones, and the veteran exults at his recent successes, in the very moment of hanging up his arms. Not once, but oftener, a brief touch of melancholy is even used to give a bewitching sweetness of memory to the comedy; he reverts tenderly to the name of kind Cinera—saucy Cinera—long gone, whom, though she was grasping from others, he could please without a gift. Of what use is it asking how much of this is true? The only thing quite certain is, that it is a lyrical exhaustion of the subject. At least, he makes it so by one final addition. The subject of woman afforded just this other possibility of topic,—he might caricature their gay beauty in the portraying of a hag, and he might mockingly rail at some of those who had formerly charmed him. Be sure he does not miss even these chances. His farcical sketches of the witch Canidia descend even to burlesque. But, besides those, he, in phrases that are magnificently bitter, thanks the gods that they had heard his prayer—Lyce is growing an old woman; and again, with malice the most musical, he taunts Lydia that the youths shake her closed casements more seldom with their knocks. The future he sketches for both is horrible. To imagine that these pieces were really addressed to actual women, is to suppose not only that Horace had no heart, but that Roman women had no nails at the ends of their fingers to scratch with.

What it all amounts to is this—that if any one will take the trouble to set down all the ways in which the subject of light love can be dealt with, keeping it always trivial, and giving to it the full interest of high comedy, omitting of course, on the one hand, modesty, and on the other carefully leaving out obscenity of wit, substituting that effectually by an innocence of audacity, it will be seen that Horace has not missed an item of the catalogue. The lasting marvel of it is, that all this is done in much less than 400 lines. Viewed as a technical feat of literary workmanship, there is nothing like it.

However, let us hasten back to the general question. Horace is no mere erotic poet; he is much more than that, he is the philosopher of gaiety. Women make but a very small part of his world of joy, and, in reality,

they ruffle its serenity; they are his one practical perplexity. The requisite lightness can only be got at all by making love's vicissitudes carry scarcely any real consequences. Unfaithfulness is taken as in the nature of things, jealousy is only described comically, the very possibility of tragedy being laughed away. The full holiday, trivial tone and style, he seeks to recover through audacity in a consistent denial of any merit to virtue. He rallies even the heavenly powers against it. In one Ode he asks Mercury to let Lyce know what punishments hereafter await virgins for being unkind to men; and in another he prays Venus to touch once with uplifted scourge disdainful Chloe for not having been wicked enough. These passages, together with several others—just as utterly inverting things—bring back some of the holiday amazement, and enable him to preserve much of the characteristics of perfect levity even in these particular Odes. Still, everybody can see that Horace likes men better than women. It is impossible to praise enough his celebrations of his male friendships. He evidently prefers a banquet to an intrigue. Love he accepts only because it is forced upon us, remaining aware that it is too uncertain, and not quite light enough, for gaiety.

Speaking generally, that which gives to the Odes their unique holiday charm is a certain fine irrationality, which is continually instigating half-aimless lyric bursts, utterly inconsequential, yet conveyed with a music of expression which is perfectly sane; indeed, so undeniably coherent is the wonderful arrangement of the syllables, that it gives everybody the impression of the healthiest joy. This it undoubtedly does represent, but it is no more specifically the joy of wantonness than that of righteousness—it is the joy of perfect language, which Horace can get from any subject. Ode XXII., B. I., begins with a marvellous chant about the man of faultless life and pure of wickedness. It sets forth that he needs neither Moorish javelins, nor bow, nor quiver filled with poisoned darts; he may safely journey either across the burning syrtes or o'er inhospitable Caucasus, or the regions washed by the fabled Hydaspes. The proof given of this magnificent moral assertion is that a wolf fled from Horace himself in the Sabine wood while he was singing of his Lalage; and the man of pure and perfect life gives to the solemn beginning this kind of ending,—

Pone sub curra nimium propinqui

Solis, in terra domibus negatâ,

Dulce ridentem Lalagen amabo,

Dulce loquentem.

Set me beneath the sun's too-nearing ear,

A land wherein no human dwellings are,

I'll love sweet-smiling Lalage, near or far,

My sweetly-speaking Lalage!

As a reverse instance, where ideas grotesque, ridiculous, are made queerly to pass into those of the very loftiest scale, take Ode XIII., B. II. It opens with imprecations on the individual who had planted a tree in the

Sabine grounds, the fall of which had nearly crushed the poet. Such a man, Horace says, he could believe broke his father's neck, spattered his most secret chamber with a guest's blood, practised Colchian poisons, &c. In such a comical connection as this, occurs the sublimest passage of the Odes,—

Quàm pæne furvæ regna Proserpinae,
Et judicantem vidimus Æacum,
Sedesque discretas piæ, et
&c.

How near we were unto the awful sight
Of dusky Proserpine's grim realm; how near
To Æacus, the judge, in all his might,
And the far seats unto the pious dear!

The splendid picture follows of Sappho and Alcæus amid the close-crowding shades in hell, the one singing to Æolian strings, the other with the loud-ringing golden quill, the woes of love, of voyage, of exile, and of war. At the delicious music, the hundred-headed monster himself droops his sable ears, and the serpents in the Furies' locks relax, swaying to its tune; while Prometheus and the sire of Pelops are beguiled from their labours by the sweet sounds, and Orion, standing fixed to listen, holds back his spear from rousing the lion or the timorous lynx. It is into this that the farcical complaints about the tumbling tree pass. By this odd mixture of things epic grandeur does not oppressively solemnise, and lyric farce is kept moderately short of its own effect; the joint result being an unique kind of unreason, which is so wholly different from real experience that it eases, entertains, leisurely excites in a perfectly holiday fashion. This exhilarating preposterousness is ingrained in the Odes, and operates collectively as well as in detail. It is helped by the perpetual, the gross, the astounding contradiction of the personal Odes and those on public affairs. Along with this wild licence of private joy there is the severest arraignment of common morals. Horace amazingly teaches the most absolute, harshest virtue for the public; he piteously bemoans the ancient times of simplicity and goodness; he wishes he had been born in them; he prays for their quick return. The reader is for ever opening his eyes wider. In the same way, and with the like bewildering result, Horace, in the very midst of his banquets, when urging all his friends to sprinkle perfumes, bring out the costliest wines, and lie on roses, avows that he is the most moderate of men, asking from gods and emperors nothing more than he has. His own good fortune, he again and again asserts, is heaven's reward of piety. A light confusion of amazement, indeed, falls upon the reader of the Odes from every possible quarter. Two or three subtle strokes of consistency in the carrying out of this systematisation of a perfectly gay world it would be a great sin of omission not to give. The pretended fierce hatred of heirs,—his constant deprecation of advancing age,—the foreboding, always present at his elbow,

of black care in the moment next to come if the festivities slacken,—and his propitiatory praises of Fortune,—these may be reckoned as the general sentiments on which he relies for framing the special feeling he is challenging. They never fail from first to last. But what we have now particularly in view are some felicities of detail. Observe how, in Ode VII., B. II., in talking to Pompeius Varrus, he dexterously contrives an historical background for these festive pictures:—

Cum quo morantem sæpe diem mero
Fregi, coronatus nitentes
Malobathro Syrio capillos.

How oft with thee I've worn away,
In wine, the day's slow-creeping calm,
Our locks, on which the garlands lay,
Soft-glistening with bright Syrian balm.

A vista of countless past delights is thrown open: Horace, we find, has always led this sort of life. He has grown old in joy. And even when he says old age has come upon him, he is still true to his faith in mirth. In Ode XI., B. II., he asks his friend Quintius Hirpinus:—

Cur non sub altâ vel platano, vel hæc
Pinu jacentes sic temere, et rosâ
Canos odorati capillos,
Dum licet, Assyriâque nardo,
Potamus uncti?

Why not stretch careless in the shade,
Beneath this lofty plane or pine,
And still be gay,—
Our hoary locks all fragrant made
With nard and roses; and the wine
Quaff while we may?

The Ode leaves the two ancient sinners sending a messenger to entice shy Lyde from her home, with instructions how she is to bind her hair, and bidding her not to leave behind her ivory lute. Horace even raises festivity into a kind of mysticism of enjoyment, drinking becoming, in an excited way, religious. In Odes XIX., B. II., and XXV., B. III., he grows wild in rhapsodizing about Bacchus, professing to have seen him amid retired rocks dictating to the nymphs and satyrs, and says he is himself driven away to groves and caverns. But, at a lower, more common level than this, he deliberately resolves upon excess as a duty. In Ode XIX., B. III., he tells Telephus it is his joy to play the madman, and complaining of the music not being loud enough, expresses his hatred of niggard hands, and calls on them to scatter the roses. At the close of Ode XII., B. IV., he assures Virgil it is sweet at fitting time to lose our wisdom. In the address to his wine-jar, he promises it, that, if things go well, the banquet shall be prolonged till Phœbus chases away the stars; so, in Ode VIII., B. III., he bids Mæcenas take a hundred cups in honour of his (Horace's) deliverance from the falling tree, and keep the

lamps burning till break of day. In Ode VII., B. II., he says not less madly than Edonians will he revel, for that to rave is a pleasure when a friend is restored. This firm, fixed contemplation of excess gives the last finishing touch of consistency to the systematic festivity. It is not enough to practise drinking and revelling as virtues; they must be followed after largely, with full effect, perseveringly. Perhaps, after all, the most subtle completion of this picture of an inverted gay world is where, in Ode VIII., B. II., he professes to believe that Barine is rewarded by the higher powers for her very faithlessness, that, so soon as she perjures herself afresh, she shines out in beauty more overwhelmingly than before :—

sed tu simul obligasti
Perfidum votis caput entescis
Pulcrrior multo, juvenumque prodis
Publica cura.

No sooner dost thou swear,
Binding with vows thy dear perfidious head,
Than blazes forth thy beauty yet more fair,
And of our youth still more the public care,
Goest forth the brighter for thy oaths unsaid.

Beyond this rewarding of a light lady with higher success in gaiety for being forsworn, it was impossible for even Horace to carry a philosophy of folly. It is the momentary reversal of everything that is proper, a perfectly complete inversion of right and wrong, in following out the fundamental literary cue, going wherever it led him. For this is only the full orb of the wicked world which is perpetually appearing, in larger or lesser phase, throughout the Odes.

Nobody can suppose that this parody of all seriousness was ever seriously meant. Is it to be imagined that Horace, who in the Satires and Epistles puts forward a real philosophy, which gives a nearly consecutively thought-out system of grave conduct, was ever really so light as this, or that his friends, including such men as Virgil, Mæcenas, Augustus, literally accepted his vehement exhortations to them to be more wanton in youth, wilder in middle life, and to think only of pleasure to the last? Why this is the permanent, the successful joke of the Odes. As we have before said, such preposterous superfluity of wrong advice, and the use of exaggerations of his own gaieties and theirs for the embellishment of the poems, must have represented in the Odes the keen humour which so spices the Satires and the Epistles. The ostensibly private character of the Odes is a delusion. They were written as literature, they were read as literature; every line, no matter how secret in appearance, was meant for the public. Horace's friends knew perfectly well that he was writing for fame, and that his using them for the characters of the poems was conferring on them a poetic immortality. Augustus himself stooped to ask it. Moreover, Horace takes good care not to let his compliments to them spoil his work; he does them the priceless favour of tacking their names on to it. Much has been said,

though not too much, of his prayer for a safe voyage to Virgil in the third Ode of the First Book. If Horace had Virgil in his mind when writing, he had something else there still more largely—his subject. He gives just eight lines to Virgil, and then devotes over thirty to the boldness of the man who first launched a bark on the ocean. In the very first Ode, purporting to be a formal dedication to Mæcenas, the great patron gets the first two lines and one before the last, out of nearly forty; the poem is of everybody else rather than Mæcenas, being a catalogue of the different ways in which men seek enjoyment. Some short pieces there are which are wholly personal, and very likely these were what they pretend to be, poetical letters to friends, but copies of them were very carefully kept. In a few others, the mention of an actual name, and the sketching of a real locality, lend themselves completely to the treatment of the subject. But this show of personality, as well as of privacy, is in no small degree illusive. Ode XVII., B. I., inviting Tyndaris, and Ode XI., B. IV., inviting Phyllis, are descriptions of his Sabine villa; in the first case, the lands; in the second, the interior of the house. In Ode II., B. II., he brings in the name of Sallustius Crispus, *apropos* of nothing, as a prefix to singing of the wise use of money. It is the same in Ode X. of that Book, where he couples his friend Murena with his picture of the moderate life. "My Postumus, my Postumus," in the famous fourteenth Ode, B. II., is the merest text for all that follows. Ode XXVII., B. III., is nearly the longest of the lyrical compositions. Though it is offered as a prayer for good omens to attend Galatea on her voyage, at the twenty-fourth line she is dismissed, and in the next fifty, that is to the finish, Europa and the bull are the theme. We might multiply the examples.

This is the sufficient explanation of how it is that nobody can read the Odes without being struck by a vein of artificiality in them. It is the fashion of Roman literature a little strange to us, and all too closely followed by Horace. The prophecy of Nereus (Ode XV., B. I.), the dialogue between a sailor and the spirit of Archytas (Ode XXVIII., B. I.), the discourse of Juno (Ode III., B. III.), the story of the daughters of Danaus (Ode XI., B. III), the fable of Danaë (Ode XVI., B. III.), and a number of other passages, are so many exercises on set literary topics. His hymns to gods and goddesses could have been very little more. They were occasions for the play of his marvellous gift of musical language, which must have had a flexibility, a range, a finish, beyond anything that we can gather now. The unusual arbitrariness of his construction, so puzzling to us, certainly meant for the old Romans a prolonged and delicate delighting of the ear. If any one wishes to know how he could excite himself with words, and the prospect of using them, let them turn to his rhapsodies about Bacchus, Odes XIX., B. II., and XXV., B. III. The real cause of his intoxicate fury is no fancied vision of Bacchus dictating to the nymphs, and driving Horace himself away to caverns; it is his self-exaltation at the prospect of saying something before unsaid. Indeed, he can almost dispense with any occasion, and start the melodious words of themselves about nothing. Such

a piece as the prayer to Venus (Ode XXX., B. I.) is simply a swoon of syllables, liquidly floating on in their own sweetness, having no other cause or end than the ecstasy of uttering them. Nearly the same may be said of his address to his page, with which the first Book closes. It is a dainty marvel of perfectness in words—a flutter of verbal music kept up throughout eight lines by a miracle of letters happening lightly. A more sustained and of course less perfect instance of pure literature is given in the latter part of the sixteenth Epode, where he describes the Happy Isles. There is no one stupid enough not to perceive that the proposal to his countrymen to bind themselves by an oath to quit Rome and set out on this inscrutable sea voyage, is literature and nothing else. It was a noble feat of his art, and it was when looking back on such feats of workmanship as this that he, at the close of Book II., and, again, at the end of Book III., exultingly predicts his immortality as a writer. What was his conscious warranty for it when he uttered that proudest of lines :—

Exegi monumentum ære perennius

(I have raised a monument more enduring than brass) ?

He could not be thinking of any opinions, any wisdom he had conveyed. He had no warrant but the music of his words. By giving absolute play to this marvellous faculty, letting it be checked by no seriousness, but attaining the full expression of folly, he had so successfully pretended to be gay, that he knew the world must listen to the Odes for ever.

But all this has referred only to Horace's first philosophy—his make-believe one of folly; he has a second, and it is wholly different. The teaching of the Satires and the Epistles is as consistently that of a wise temperance as this of the Odes is that of reckless licence. A few hints of the graver doctrines are dropped in the lyrics, but they are not allowed to spoil the lightness. However, the other part of the subject must stand over.

Venetian Popular Legends.

THE love of fairy tales seems to be one of those touches of nature that make the whole world kin. From the Ganges to the Thames, from Sicily to Lapland, the legends of our nursery days are cherished and transmitted in one form or another; universal as the sunshine, and as perennially unfading. In a collection of fairy tales, traditions, and legends, taken down literally from the lips of Venetian women of the populace—and without abbreviation, addition, or correction of a syllable—are to be found several curious illustrations of the homogeneity of this class of narrative all over the world. They are, besides, amusing from the indescribable *naïveté* which pervades them, and the quaint peeps they give us into Venetian “interiors” of the humbler sort.

This collection has been made *con amore* by a native Venetian gentleman named Bernoni, who took them down verbatim, as they were told by the *comari* (old wives, gossips) of Castello or Canáregio, and has published them in several little volumess. They are not, however, accessible to all readers, even those who are well acquainted with Italian, inasmuch as they are given in unadulterated Venetian dialect, which differs as much—or more—from pure Tuscan, as the diction of Burns’s “Tam O’Shanter” differs from the English of Pope. I purpose presenting to the reader a few specimens of these really popular stories, in which both the likeness and unlikeness to their northern brothers and sisters of the same family are worthy of remark. But I despair of fully rendering into English the quaint simplicity of the original, or the air of child-like gravity with which the most incongruous and amazing incidents are quietly taken for granted.

To begin with a story which has some faint and shadowy resemblance to the legend of King Lear and his daughters, and which is called in Venetian “*Come ’l bon sal* ;” that is to say, “Like good salt.”

“Once upon a time there was a king, and this king had three daughters. One fine day he took it into his head to call these three daughters, and to ask them, one after another, if they loved him. He calls the eldest, and he says, ‘Hark ye, do you love me?’ Says she, ‘Yes, daddy, I do.’ ‘And how much?’ ‘As much as good bread.’ The king thinks and thinks, and then he says, ‘Yes; when you’re hungry bread is a good thing.’ Then he calls the middle daughter, and he says to her, ‘Hark ye, do you love me?’ ‘Yes, daddy, I do.’ ‘And how much?’ ‘As much as good wine.’ Well, the king thinks and thinks, and then he says, ‘Yes, yes; wine puts life into a man, therefore it is a good thing.’ Then he

calls the youngest daughter, and he says, 'Hark ye, and do *you* love me too?' 'Yes, daddy, I do.' 'And how much?' 'As much as good salt.' And the king said, 'As much as good salt!' And he began to think and think, and, because salt by itself tastes bad, this answer of the youngest daughter did not please him."

The king, having satisfied himself by reflection that to be loved as much as good salt is equivalent to not being loved at all, calls his most faithful servant, and orders him to conduct the youngest princess into some desert place, there to kill her, and to bring back her eyes and her heart in proof of the accomplishment of the deed. The faithful servant receives this remarkable order with the utmost calmness, merely replying, "*Sarà fatto tutto quanto*" (It shall all be done). The princess is conducted into a 'great meadow,' and there informed that her father's commands are that she shall be killed, and her eyes and heart carried back to the palace. Whilst she is begging for her life, she perceives a little dog, and exclaims that Heaven has sent it to assist her escape. She persuades the faithful servant to kill the dog, and carry back its eyes and heart instead of her own. He consents; and she is left alone in the great meadow, very much at a loss what to do, and crying bitterly. In the midst of her grief and perplexity she meets with an old woman—a fairy of course—who gives her a little wand. When she puts the wand into her bosom her form will change to that of an old woman. She is then to proceed in a certain direction until she finds a palace. In this palace, as the fairy happens to know, they are in want of a woman to look after the poultry. The princess is told to ring the bell of the palace and offer herself for the place in her assumed form of an old woman. All which falls out according to the fairy's directions, and the princess is received as hen-woman into the king's service. There not being room for her to sleep in the palace, she is put to lodge in an outhouse hard by. One evening, the queen's son, happening to pass that way, hears the old hen-woman in her chamber sobbing and lamenting in a very piteous manner. He waits until she comes out, and asks her the cause of her grief. Is she discontented with her master and mistress? No; on the contrary, the hen-woman is most thankful to them, but she is crying over some private misfortunes of her own. But the next evening the young king goes near the outhouse again, and hears the same lamentations. His curiosity is excited. He makes a hole in the wall 'with a gimlet,' and, peeping through it, he beholds no old hen-woman, but a beautiful young lady; for the princess resumes her proper form in her own chamber every night by the simple process of putting down the fairy's little wand which she carries in her bosom all day.

"The young king went directly to his mother, and said to her, 'Mother, mother, it's no old woman that minds our hens, but the most beautiful girl that eyes ever saw. Come quickly and look, for I have made a hole in the wall, and you can peep through.' With that the queen up and went, and looked through the hole, and saw a beautiful

girl, crying bitterly. Said the queen, 'Well, you're right; she is a most beautiful young woman.' The son said, 'Mother, I'll have her for my wife.' 'Very well, we'll go and ask her.' They waited until the hen-woman came out, and then the queen said to her, 'Why are you always crying so, goody? But, indeed, you're not goody, but a beautiful young girl, and I won't have you stay there any longer.' 'And if you're content,' said the king, 'I'll have you for my wife.' 'Oh, your majesty,' said she; 'that's not for the like of me!' 'No matter for that,' said the queen. 'Come along with us now, and in a fortnight's time you shall be my son's wife.'"

This arrangement is acceded to by the disguised princess. But she requests as a favour that on the day of her wedding the bridegroom shall invite "all the other kings" to a banquet; and that, moreover, all the dishes set before one special king, whom she will indicate, shall be dressed entirely without salt, and that the said king shall be seated next to her.

"The wedding day came. All the kings who had been invited were there, and among them the king whose dinner was to be served without salt, and he sat next the bride. When the dinner was served, this king began to sup his broth, and found that there was no salt in it, and he gave a great sigh. He looked at the bride who sat beside him, and he kept looking and looking, because she was so exactly like his daughter. Said she to him, 'What's the matter, your royal majesty, that you sigh, and don't eat?' He gave another sigh, and looked at her, but said nothing. They brought one dish after another, but he only just tasted them, and then left them, because they were all without salt. The bride began again saying to him, 'But whatever is the matter that you keep on sighing so, and eat nothing?' 'I sigh because of something that comes into my head.' 'Oh, but eat now, and don't think of anything else!' Then the king could not hold his peace any longer. The remorse he felt—the dinner without salt—the bride who was so like his daughter—all made his heart so full, that it was ready to burst, and he was obliged to speak. 'If you only knew,' said he, 'what I have done! One fine morning I took it into my head to call all my daughters, and ask them if they loved me. The youngest one said, yes, she did as much as good salt. At the moment it seemed to me that salt was not a good thing; but now I know how good it is, and that we cannot do without it. But at the moment, in a fit of rage, I called my servant, and ordered him to take away my daughter into some desert place, and to kill her, and to bring back her eyes and her heart. And he did it. He took her away, and killed her, and brought me back her eyes and her heart. And when I look at you I seem to see my daughter, you are so like her.' 'Have you that servant still?' said she. 'Yes; I have him still. But it was none of his fault, you know. He only did what I bade him.' 'And if I were to say to you that I am your daughter, would you believe me? And that the servant, instead of killing me, killed a little dog, and that, instead of taking out my eyes and my heart, he took out the little dog's,

and that he left me to my fate?' Then the king, when he heard all this, was ready to faint. He was just going to fall down on his knees, and ask his daughter's pardon; but she said, 'You must do nothing of the sort. Let bygones be bygones; you will always be my own daddy, and now let us think of nothing but making merry. Only I should like that everything belonging to me at home should be given to that servant, because it was he who saved my life.' The king was so delighted at finding his daughter again, whom he thought was dead, and at being present at her wedding, that he ordered eight days' more feasting at his own expense, and invited all the kings of his acquaintance, and the faithful servant too, and they had a great merry-making, and lived happy ever after."

The reader will recognise more than one incident of this narrative as belonging to various well-known fairy tales. This fusion of different stories together is noticeable in Signor Bernoni's collection in several instances. Take our old friend Bluebeard, for example: the Venetian story-tellers have amalgamated him with one of Grimm's *Hausmärchen*—(one wonders how it got amongst the Lagoons)—and changed his cerulean hue to that of the foul fiend himself. The story is entitled "El Diavolo."

"Once upon a time there was a husband and wife, and they had three daughters all grown up, and they took in washing. As it happened, a gentleman passed by their house one day and fell in love with the eldest girl. He went to her parents and asked if they would give her to him for his wife. They saw that he was a handsome gentleman, and they said yes. And he married her, and took her away. And he took her to the finest palace that eyes could see. When they got there, he gave her the keys of all the rooms; but he said 'Go wherever you like, except into that room there. If you do go into it, it will be worse for you.' And he gave her a beautiful fresh rose to put in her hair, and then he up and went away. This woman was curious to know what was in that chamber that he said she was not to go into, so she went and opened the door, and she saw that there were ever so many souls inside, all on the fire, and she knew that it was hell. 'Oh!' cried she, 'what have I done? what have I done? For certain, he'll put me in there too!' Then she looked at the rose in her hair and saw that it was quite faded. By-and-by back comes the husband, and says he, 'Good morning!' He noticed that the rose was faded, and he knew well enough that she had been into that room; so he said, 'Did you go into that room where I told you not to go?' And she answered him, 'Not I, indeed! Once you told me not to go; that was enough.' 'Very well; now I'll take you myself to see it.' With that he opened the chamber and pushed her into it. Then he locked the door; and what did he do but set off to her mother, and he told her that her daughter had been so ill, so ill, until at last she was dead; and that now he should like to have the second daughter. And the mother gave her to him."

The same story is of course repeated with the second daughter, and, after she is disposed of in the same manner as her sister, the devil—who

is represented as an eminently domestic character—not being able to do without a wife, returns a third time to the house of the washerwoman and demands her last remaining daughter in marriage. He obtains her from her confiding parents, takes her home, gives her the keys and the fresh-blown rose, and absents himself as before. But this third young lady is at least a match for her husband! She is no whit less curious than her sisters, but she takes the precaution of removing the rose from her hair before peeping into the forbidden chamber. Of course she sees there what her sisters saw, and sees them into the bargain. They cry to her to hasten away, for otherwise her husband will throw her in there too. But, nothing daunted, she answers, "Wait a bit. Don't be afraid. Only leave it to me!" The master of the house on his return finds his wife with the flower in her hair still fresh and blooming. He accepts her assurance that she has obeyed him, and professes an unbounded affection for her.

" 'Well now, hark ye, old man,' said she; 'we must think of sending a few things to the wash, for all the house linen is dirty. To-morrow morning I will put it all into a chest, and you must carry it to my mother's, and she'll wash it for us.' She waited till her husband went out, and then she put a few soiled things into the chest, and went and fetched her eldest sister and put her into the chest too, and some money besides. And she said to her, 'Remember, when you are on the way, if you feel him setting the chest down to peep into it, you must cry out "*Mind, I'm looking at you!*"' And she shut up the chest, and left it until he came back. By-and-by home he came, and she said to him, 'Now, there's a good fellow, take this chest and carry it to my mother's. But mind you don't peep into it, d'ye hear? because if you do peep I shall see you.' With that he took up the chest on his shoulders. 'Oh,' cried he, 'what a weight it is!' 'Well, just think,' answered his wife, 'it is such a long time since we had a wash that everything was dirty!' When he was on the road he began to think 'What a weight this chest is! I should like to know what's inside it!' He was just beginning to set it down, when he heard a voice crying '*Mind, I'm looking at you!*' 'Oh,' says he, 'she can see me! No, no, I won't touch it.' "

The chest with its contents is safely carried to the washerwoman's house and left there; the husband answering his wife's inquiries on his return home with the assurance that he has not peeped into it. The same thing happens again when the second sister is put into the chest, like Falstaff into the buck-basket, and carried to her mother's house. In order to effect her own escape, the cunning third sister feigns illness. She desires to be left undisturbed because she wants to sleep, and tells her husband that he will find another chest full of soiled linen at her bedroom door, which he must carry to the wash as before. Meanwhile she makes a huge rag-doll, dresses it in her own clothes, places it in her bed, and gets into the chest herself, not forgetting to take with her a provision of money and fine linen this time.

"By-and-by the devil came home and went on tip-toe into the bedroom. He looked at the bed, and saw her there all covered up, and said he, 'Oh, bless her heart! I won't wake her. I'll leave her quiet. Now I'll carry the chest away.' He took up the chest, but said he, 'My stars and garters (*corpo di Baco!*), what a weight this one is! It's heavier than the two others.' And he put it on his shoulders and set off. But when he had got half way, he began to set down the chest, and he heard a voice crying, '*Mind, I'm looking at you!*' 'Why, bless her heart,' says he; 'although she's ill in bed, she sees me all the same!' He went to her mother's house, and said he, 'Make haste and get all these things washed; I must be off home to my wife, for she's not at all well.' 'Mercy me!' cried the mother, 'I hope *she's* not going to die like those two others!' 'No, no; I'm going at once to look after her.' He went home and went on tip-toe into the bedroom, and went up to the bed, and said, 'Wife, how goes it? Ah! she don't answer me. Poor dear! why, can she be dead?' With that he pulled the cover off the bed, and found the rag-doll there. 'Ah, the hussy! she has tricked me! Oh dear, oh dear! whatever will become of me?' He ran into the other room to see if the two sisters were there still, and found them gone too. Upon this the devil fell into such a passion that he got a fit of the bile, and that killed him. And so, you see, as the saying is, women are a match for the devil himself."

In this story, as in its German prototype, one is struck with admiration for the confiding simplicity of the devil, and his affectionate solicitude for his deceitful wife. If it be a true canon of art to present your hero always under a favourable aspect, certainly this tale of "El Diavolo" is highly artistic, for the *protagonista* enlists one's sympathies from the very beginning!

The Venetian version of "Cinderella" differs from ours chiefly in the circumstance that the heroine is cinder-wench in the palace of the young king whom she eventually marries. And this young gentleman, occasionally coming into the kitchen to talk to the queen his mother (who was a model housewife, if one may judge from her constant presence in those regions), sees the dirty, sordid-looking cinder-wench, and takes a violent disgust to her; so much so, indeed, that the first time he beholds her at her duties about the hearth where the cooking is going on, he exclaims, with more frankness than politeness, "Mind you touch nothing, d'ye hear? Because it turns my stomach to look at you!" The first morning after the ball in which the beautiful stranger has enchanted all eyes, the king comes into the kitchen to talk over the entertainment with the queen, whom he addresses as "Sacred Majesty mamma." And he goes into ecstasies about the loveliness and splendour of the unknown princess. Cinderella, hearing all this, mutters over and over again, as quickly as she can utter the words, "*Giera-mi, giera-mi*" ('Twas I, 'twas I). "What's the matter with you," says the king, "that you mutter and mumble and jabber, and no one can make out a word you say? Mind the hearth, and

hold your tongue, do!" After the second ball, the same thing happens. But this time Cinderella speaks a little more distinctly; and when the king describes the marvellous beauty and brilliancy of the unknown lady, she says, "*Giera-mi, giera-mi*," so as to be heard and understood.

"What's the matter with you *now*, you ugly scarecrow?" said the king, and he took up the tongs and gave her a rap on the pate. But she went on saying, "'Twas I, 'twas I. Yes, yes, 'twas I." "Well," said the king, "I shan't argue any more with this ugly fright, for, if I did, I feel that I should kill her outright."

The slipper plays but a small part in the Venetian "Cinderella." It is not made of glass, but of diamonds; and Cinderella does not lose it after the ball, but throws it to the servants whom the king sets to watch her and discover whither she goes, in order that, while they are scrambling for it, she may get clear off. His majesty falls sick of love and disappointment, takes to his bed, and refuses food. For several days he will eat nothing, but at length he calls his "Sacred Majesty mamma," and says that if she will make him a bread soup, he thinks he can eat it. But she must prepare it with her own hands, and let no one else touch it. Above all, she is to take care that the cinder-wench does not come near the soup. Sacred Majesty mamma promises to do as he desires. She makes the soup, and cooks it over the fire, watching all the while that the scarecrow of a cinder-wench does not touch it. But for one moment her majesty looks away from the saucepan, and in that moment Cinderella drops into the soup a diamond ring which the king had put on her finger at the last ball. This of course leads to the discovery of the whole story, and the missing diamond slipper is fitted on to Cinderella's foot, as an additional corroboration of her identity with the beautiful stranger.

Amongst the superstitions peculiar to Venice is a very special reverence for St. John the Baptist, styled, in the soft Venetian vernacular, San Zuane. And what is very singular, is the popular belief that any love-making between a godfather and godmother (*compare e comare de San Zuane*) who have stood at the baptismal font together, is a more heinous sin than almost any other offence against morality. In the collection of "Popular Venetian Legends," made by Signor Bernoni, and printed, as he emphatically assures us, as they fell from the mouths of the people, without any change whatsoever, there occur one or two curious instances of this superstition. The following are literally translated, but with a little compression:—

"Here in Venice, Heaven knows how many centuries ago, there was a gentleman and lady, husband and wife, who were rich people. Well, there frequented their house a *compare* of St. John; and it came to pass that he and his *comare*, the lady of the house, made love to each other in secret. This lady had a maid, and this maid knew everything. So one day this lady said to the maid, 'Hold your tongue, and you'll see that you shall be satisfied with me. When I come to die, you shall have an allowance of a dollar a day.' (In the original, *talaro*, i.e. thaler; a remi-

miscence of the Austrian occupation.) So this maid kept always on good terms with the lady. It happened that the *compare* fell very ill. The lady was so desperately sorry, that her husband kept saying to her, 'Come, will you make yourself ill too? It's no use fretting, for it's what we must all come to.' At last the *compare* died. And she took it so to heart, that she fell ill in earnest. When her husband saw her giving way to such low spirits, he began to suspect that there had been something between her and the *compare*; but he never said a word about it to annoy her, but bore it like a philosopher. The maid was always by her mistress's bedside; and the mistress said to her, 'Remember that, if I die, you must watch by me quite alone, for I won't have any one else.' And the maid promised her that she would. Well, that day went by, and the next day, and the next, and the lady got worse and worse, until at last she died. You can fancy how sorry her husband was. And the maid and the other servants were very sorry too, for she was a very good lady. The other servants offered to sit up and watch with the maid; but she said, 'No; I must sit up by myself, for my mistress said she would have no others.' And they said, 'Very well. If you want anything, ring the bell, and we shall be ready to do anything you want.' Then the maid had four tapers lighted, and placed at the foot of the bed, and she took the Office for the Dead in her hand, and began to read it.

"Just at midnight the door of the room was burst open, and she saw the figure of the *compare* come in. Directly she saw him she felt her blood turn to water. She tried to cry out, but she was so terrified that she couldn't make a sound. Then she got up from her chair, and went to ring the bell; and the dead man, without saying a word (because, of course, dead folks can't talk) gave her a sharp blow on the hand to prevent her from ringing. And he signed to her to take a taper in her hand, and come with him to her mistress's bed. She obeyed. When the dead man got to the bedside, he took the lady, and set her up on the bed, and he began to put her stockings on to her feet, and he dressed her from head to foot. When she was dressed, he pulled her out of bed, took her by the arm, and they both went out at the door, with the maid going before them to light the way. In this palace there was an underground passage—there are many like it in Venice*—and they went down into it. When they got to a certain part of it, he gave a great knock to the taper that the maid had in her hand, and left her in the dark. The maid was so terrified that she fell down on the ground, all rolled up together like a ball, and there she lay.

"At daybreak the other servants thought they would go and see how the maid was getting on, as she had not called them all night. So they went, and opened the door of the room, and saw nobody there at all,

* The goodwife who told the story was mistaken here. The only subterranean passage known to exist at Venice (with the exception of the crypt of St. Mark's) is underneath the church of St. Zachariah. But the belief in the existence of such passages is wide-spread amongst the populace.—*Translator's Note.*

either living or dead. They were frightened out of their wits, and ran to their master, and said, 'Oh mercy on us, there's nobody left, neither the dead woman nor the live one! The room's quite empty.' Said the master, 'You don't say so!' Then he dressed himself as fast as he could, and went and looked, and found nobody. And he saw that the clothes his wife wore to go out in, were gone too. Then he called the servants, and said to them, 'Here, take these torches, and let us go and look in the underground passage.' So all the people went down there with lighted torches, and, after searching about a bit, they found the poor maid, who gave no sign of life. The servants took her by one arm; but it was all bent up stiff, and wouldn't move. And they tried the other arm, and that was the same. And all her body was knotted together quite stiff. Then they took up this ball of a woman, and carried her upstairs, and put her on her bed. The master sent for the doctors to see if they could bring back life to her. And by degrees she began to open her eyes, and move her fingers. But she had had a stroke, and couldn't speak. But by the movements of her fingers they could make out nearly everything she wanted to say. Then the master had the torches lighted again, and went down again into the underground passage to see if he could find any trace of the dead woman. They looked and looked, but they could find nothing but a deep hole. And the master understood directly that that was where his wife and her *compare* had been swallowed up. And upon that he went upstairs again, but he wouldn't stay any longer in that palace, nor even in Venice; and he went away to Verona. And in the palace he left the maid with her dollar a day and people to take care of her and feed her, for to the end of her days she was bed-ridden and couldn't speak. And the master would have every one free to go and see that sight, that it might be a warning to all people who had the evil intention of not respecting the *compare* of St. John."

The next story is called the "Compare of the Ring."*

"You must know that we Venetians have a saying that the *compare* of the ring is the *compare* of the first child. Well, at the Angel Raphael (a parish of the city, so called), it happened that there was a young man and woman who were in love with each other. So they agreed to be married, and the bridegroom looked out for his best man. According to custom, directly he had chosen his best man, he took him to the bride's house, and he said to the bride, 'Look here, this is your *compare*.' Directly the *compare* saw the bride he fell so much in love with her that he consented more than willingly to be the best man. Well, the wedding day came, and this man went into the church with evil thoughts in his heart. When they came out of church they had a collation according to custom; and then in the afternoon they had a gondola to go to the tavern, as people use to do on such days. First the bride gets into the gondola with the best man; and then the bridegroom and the relations.

* The *compare* of *Panolo* is the bridegroom's friend, the "best man" at the wedding.—*Translator's Note.*

When they were getting into the boat, the *compare* took the bride's hand to help her in, and he squeezed it, and squeezed it so hard that he downright hurt her.

"As time went on, he saw that the bride thought nothing about him, and he began not to care for her, either. But by-and-by he began to have a sort of scruple of conscience about what he had done to his *compare* on the wedding day. And the more he thought of it, the more he felt this scruple. So he made up his mind to go to confession, and to tell his confessor what he had done, and with what evil intention. 'You have committed a great sin, my son,' said the priest; 'I shall give you a penance,—a heavy penance. Will you do it?' 'Yes, father,' said he. 'Tell me what it is.' The priest answered, 'Listen; in the night time you must make a journey to a place that I shall tell you of. But mind, whatever voices you hear, you must never turn back for an instant! And take three apples with you, and you will meet three noblemen, and you must give one apple to each of them.' Then the priest told him the place he was to go to, and the *compare* left him. Well, he waited until nightfall, and then he took his three apples and set out. He walked, and walked, and walked until at last he came to the place the priest had told him of, and he heard such a talking and murmuring, you can't think. One voice said one thing, and one another. These were all folks who had committed great sins against St. John; but he knew nothing about that. He heard them calling out, 'Turn back! turn back!' But not he! No; he went straight on without ever looking round, let them call ever so. After he had gone on awhile he saw the three noblemen, and he saluted them, and gave them an apple apiece. The last of the three had his arm hidden under his cloak, and the *compare* saw that the gentleman had great difficulty in stretching his arm out to take the apple. At length he pulled his arm from under his cloak, and showed a hand swelled up to such a huge size that the *compare* was frightened to look at it. But he gave him the apple, the same as to the others, and they all three thanked him and went away. The *compare* returned home again, and went to his confessor, and told him all that had happened. Then the priest said, 'See now, my son, you are saved! For the first of the three noblemen was the Lord, the second was St. Peter, and the third was St. John. You saw what a hand he had? Well, that was the hand you squeezed on the wedding day, and so, instead of squeezing the bride's hand, you really hurt St. John!'"

The belief in "ghosts"—the spirits of the dead returning to haunt the living—is also as deeply rooted in Venice as elsewhere. There is a favourite story tending to show that the ghosts are apt to be highly offended with any one who is sceptical enough to deny their existence. It is called the "Parish Priest of San Marcuola." (*San Marcuola* is the vulgar name for the church dedicated to Saints Ermagora and Fortunato.)

"Once upon a time there was a parish priest at St. Marcuola here in Venice, who was a very good man. He couldn't bear to see women in

church with hats or bonnets on their heads, and he had spirit enough to go and make them take them off. 'For,' said he, 'the church is the house of God; and what is not permitted to men ought not to be permitted to women.' But when a woman had a shawl over her shoulders he would have her throw it over her head, that she might not be stared at and ogled. But this priest had one fault: he did not believe in ghosts. And one day he was preaching a sermon, and in this sermon he said to the people, 'Listen now, dearly beloved brethren. This morning, when I came into the church here, there comes up to me one of my flock, and she says to me, all in a flutter, 'Oh, Father, what a fright I have had this night! I was asleep in my bed, and the ghosts came and twitched away my coverlet.' But I answered her, 'Dear daughter, that is not possible, because *where the dead are, there they stay.*' And so he declared before all the congregation that it wasn't true that the dead could come back and be heard and seen. In the evening the priest went to bed as usual, and about midnight he heard the house bell ring loudly. The servant went out on to the balcony and saw a great company of people in the street, and she called out, 'Who's there?' and they asked her if the Priest of San Marcuola was at home. And she said yes; but he was in bed. Then they said he must come down. But the priest, when he heard about it, refused to go. They then began to ring the bell again and tell the servant to call her master; and the priest said he wouldn't go anywhere. Then all the doors were burst open, and the whole company marched upstairs into the priest's bedroom, and bade him get up and dress himself and come with them; and he was obliged to do what they said. When they reached a certain spot they set him in the midst of them, and they gave him so many knocks and cuffs that he didn't know which side to turn himself; and then they said, 'This is for a remembrance of the poor defunct;' and upon that they all vanished away and were seen no more, and the poor priest went back home bruised from head to foot. And so the ghosts proved plain enough that it isn't true to say, '*Where the dead are, there they stay.*'"

Signor Bernoni has published, moreover, a collection of "Popular Beliefs and Superstitions," another of "Witch Stories," and another of "Popular Songs and Ballads," all of which offer a rich mine to the curious investigator; but time and space do not allow of my dipping into them further at present. It may be observed that the witch stories are of a particularly mild and light character, entirely devoid of the horror and ferocity which surround Northern stories on the same subject. Indeed, throughout the entire collection of tales and legends there runs a strain of mingled practicality and simplicity which is eminently Italian, and a sunshiny softness of colouring which is perhaps specially Venetian.

Art and Morality.

A PRETENTIOUS fallacy is going about in the world. It has never been put into a very clear formula, because when clearly expressed it is self-contradictory. Few people care for logic, and people of artistic tendencies care for it less than their neighbours; yet there are some limits to the inconsistency of the most daring theorists. One cannot, therefore, find any articulate expression of a theory which seems to be either nonsensical or impudently immoral. As this does not prevent it from pervading a good deal of contemporary writing, we may try to find out what is really meant. The discovery will probably serve pretty well for a confutation.

When a man is accused of writing an immoral book, he has, of course, any number of excuses. One is that the book is perfectly moral; another, that it has nothing to do with morality; a third, that it is not written for children, but for men; a fourth, that if it does not express the morality of Philistines and prudes, it embodies a higher morality, which lies outside of the poor old Ten Commandments. The accused sums up his general position by saying that art and morality are two different things, and that a critic has no business to judge a poem by the rules which he would apply to a sermon. Let us look a little more closely at one or two of these pleas.

Now, in the first place, it is no new discovery that many things which are pleasant are wrong. The doctrine has been known and applied in practice for several thousand years. If it were not the case, there would be no necessity for any morality at all. If everybody always liked doing what he ought to do, we could get on without any rules. The primary purpose of the artist is to give pleasure, and the primary purpose of the preacher to suppress vice. Therefore the two often come into conflict. There is nothing surprising about this. A man likes to drink a bottle of brandy before breakfast; we admit that he gains a pleasure, and we may, perhaps, think that we have no right to interfere with him. His conduct is bestial; but as it only hurts himself, we let him alone. If, however, he tries to persuade his neighbour to be as bestial as himself, our duty is plain. We should, perhaps, like to lock him up or give him six months on the treadmill; but if that is not possible, we speak our minds in the plainest language, and try to make him heartily ashamed of himself. Now, if he is not only corrupt himself and anxious to corrupt others, but also uses great talents to carry out his immoral purpose, the case only differs by being a good deal worse. He may write the most powerful poetry or paint the most lifelike pictures to make other men as great brutes as himself, and we can only say that the crime is aggravated by the

talent. If, for any reason, legal punishment is impossible, the critic should step in and administer the lash with the full strength of his arm. The harder he hits and the deeper he cuts the better for the world. So far the case seems to be perfectly clear. If a man really has the impudence to say that immorality is right because it is artistic, he is either talking nonsense or proposing as a new law of morals what is too absurd to require confutation.

Nobody, however, would say this in so many words. The ground is therefore shifted, and people tell us that the spheres of art and morality are different. This amounts to saying, not that immorality becomes moral when it is artistic, but that art cannot possibly be immoral. The two things have nothing to do with each other. An immoral poem is as great a contradiction in terms as a blue sound or a square smell. If the logic is not so bad in this case, the statement of fact is still more preposterous. There is such a thing, for example, as religious art. The greatest poems and the greatest pictures in the world are distinct expressions of religious sentiment. As such they produce a powerful effect upon human beings. Millions of people have been taught to worship the Virgin by artistic representations, more forcibly than by the most eloquent preaching. If that worship be, as some people say, a debasing superstition, the effect is pernicious and immoral; if, as their opponents say, it stimulates the most elevating emotions, the effect is moral and beneficial in the highest degree. On any showing, it is certain that, in this case, art exerts a most powerful influence upon the deepest part of our nature. Morality is a system of rules for regulating our passions. Art is the means by which the men who feel most strongly and think most powerfully appeal to the passions of their weaker brethren. To say that they produce no moral effect is to say that they produce no effect at all, and the proposition is about as absurd as to say that example has never any influence upon practice. It would be much truer to say that art provides the most powerful, though the least obtrusive, means by which the standard of morality is affected. The songs of a nation, to quote once more the poor old truism, affect men's manners more than their laws. The poems which they learn by heart, the novels with which they amuse their leisure, the pictures which hang upon their dwelling-rooms, affect their whole theory of life and conduct, or they do nothing. Well, it has been said by a very clever and very impudent teacher of what he professed, this is not to the purpose. Art is the product of society, not its creator. Cr billon was made by the regency, not the regency by Cr billon. An artist must express the prevalent sentiment of his time, be it sound or corrupt, brutalising or elevating. Truly, this argument is worse than the preceding. Like other appeals to fatalism, it is self-contradictory. If Cr billon could not help writing filth, other men—luckily for the world—could not help hating filth and filthy writers. I am predestined, you say, to be a nauseous gutter, discharging all the vicious humours of society. If so, you are also predestined to cause disgust in everybody who has an atom of purity in his composition,

But—to leave this logic-chopping—the statement is false. Society is not, as some people seem to fancy, an independent entity; it is simply the name for an aggregate of human beings, each of whom can perhaps do little, but of whom each lives and moves and breathes in the atmosphere of his neighbours' opinions. Each man gives and takes. Nobody is for an instant independent of his neighbours. Anybody who helps to corrupt the social atmosphere is doing what lies in him to spread the deadliest of diseases. If the regent corrupted Crébillon, Crébillon saved the regent's blushes. A man can no more escape from that responsibility on the plea that he can't help himself, than he could rely upon the same plea as an excuse for picking pockets.

Another evasion may be more plausible. Art, it may be admitted, can be used to advance or retard the moral development of the race; but still the normal sphere of art is in great part distinct from that of morality. The artist has to reflect what he sees around him. He is like the sun shining upon the just and the unjust. He paints vice and virtue as they exist, and looks on with a Shakspearean toleration at every possible development of human character. His responsibility ends with the duty of fidelity to facts. If he provides expression for all emotions and paints all facts, he may safely leave it to others to turn his work to account. All emotions, it is added, are good in their place. The artist repudiates the ascetic theory which proposes to prune and clip human nature in accordance with some arbitrary model. Stylites on his pillar may condemn the poet's praises of love and wine; but we don't admit that the saint is right. We must have our Burns and Byron, our Béranger and our Heine, to teach the Puritans that there are more things in this world than are dreamt of in their philosophy. We are not all going to put on strait waistcoats because some saints are afraid of their own passions, or to confine ourselves to writing for school-girls because in the great outside world we shall be sometimes forced to associate with publicans and sinners.

Here, indeed, there seems to be some mixture of truth; but we must begin by eliminating a fallacy or two before we come to the residuum of sound doctrine. Byron, you say, has one theory of life, and Stylites had another. Stylites, to put it briefly, thought that great part of human nature ought to be suppressed. Byron ridiculed, scorned, and satirised the Puritans of his day for holding a similar doctrine. He said that human nature should not be put in a strait waistcoat, and proceeded, as far as in him lay, to tear the said strait waistcoat to fragments and tatters. He may have been right or wrong, or a little of both. But, right or wrong, he was a moralist just as distinctly as his opponents. He had his theory as much as they had theirs, though he did not draw up a code of morality, and support its merits by good set arguments. He said in substance, and said with extraordinary vigour, that the accepted rules made men sneaks, hypocrites, and tyrants. His morality may have been chiefly negative, but it was a morality of the most drastic and contagious kind. He may possibly be quoted as a precedent to show that a poet

ought to encourage what some people call vice ; but he certainly can't be quoted to show that poets have nothing to do with vice. The doctrine, Eat, drink, and be merry, is just as much a moral doctrine as the doctrine, Watch and pray. Each is a rule for determining our conduct in life. One, it may be, is right and the other wrong ; but they are related to each other as a proposition and its contradictory ; not as two propositions which cannot possibly come into collision because referring to two different spheres. You may prefer Byron to Mrs. Hannah More ; but you can't possibly obey both or say that they are talking about two different things. The relation may, however, be expressed in another way, which perhaps brings us nearer to the true statement. The duty of the moralist, it may be said, is to keep emotions under due restraint ; the duty of the artist is to find them a voice and embody them in appropriate symbols. Since every emotion is right in its proper place, there is none which should be excluded from artistic utterance. We should know what all men think and have thought about themselves and the world ; the sceptic and the believer, the enthusiast and the cynic, the man of strenuous ambition and the indolent epicurean should each express himself in art and song. There is a time for all things ; a time to be sad and a time to be merry ; and as in Mr. Tennyson's *Palace of Art*, the imagination should contain a gallery hung round with pictures "fit for every mood of mind." To part of this doctrine we must emphatically demur. There are passions which ought to be suppressed, however little we may be inclined to the ascetic theory. The progress of the race is a process of eradicating brutalising and anti-social instincts. He who keeps them alive is doing harm, and more harm if he has the talents of a Shakspeare, a Mozart, or a Raphael. There are sentiments which imply moral disease as distinctly as there are sensations which imply physical disease. Cynicism, and prurience, and a voluptuous delight in cruelty are simply abominable, whoever expresses them, and however great his powers. Human nature, unluckily, is not all that could be wished. There are people to whom it is a pleasure to dwell upon foul and cruel impulses, who hate virtue and therefore deny its existence. They are simply a nuisance ; and if they can't be stamped out by sterner measures, they should at least be kept in order by public opinion. The artist, it is often said, should not be condemned to write for school-girls. Certainly not ; but to use such an argument on behalf of vice is simply to say that we ought all to get drunk because we are not all bound to retire to a cloister. "You," we say, "are a wretched debauchee." "Well," it is replied, "I can't be a milkop." There are, luckily, other alternatives. To the doctrine that novels should be written for men as well as school-girls, we should add that there is only one class of human beings for whom they should not be written. That is the class who have become men, but have ceased to be manly. Nobody should compose poems for human beasts. Prudery is a bad thing ; but there is something worse.

To leave that unpleasant topic, however, let us admit that, as a rule, all healthy phases of human feeling may be rightfully represented. Keats

is not to be condemned because his poetry is the expression of a sensuous temperament. A keen delight in all external beauty of form and colour, even the lower pleasures of the animal appetites, may be fitly expressed in art. We will not condemn the convivial poet who sang the praises of "jolly good ale and old;" we will continue to love our Burns, and Béranger, and Horace, and Herriek, epicureans though they may have been at times, and will agree with Sir Toby Belch that cakes and ale shall still be consumed, and ginger be hot in the mouth, though Malvolios may still exist in the world, and though Sir Wilfrid Lawson may propose to shut up all public-houses in the most genial and facetious terms. This is the doctrine which is really advocated by persons who deny the relations of art to morality, when that avowal is not meant to cover a cynical denial of all moral obligation. There is here a real difficulty upon some theories. We feel that, in spite of all his interpreters, it is hard to make Shakspeare a moralist. He is terribly tolerant to Falstaff and Sir Toby Belch. He does not turn round upon us to preach morality like a religious tract; and, indeed, we find it rather hard to extract any definite moral from his works. Nor is Keats, the great favourite of a modern school, very strong as a preacher. He is not one of the strait-laced; nor could any of his poems be read with good effect at a meeting of Messrs. Moody and Sankey. And yet we could not give up our Falstaff, or Romeo and Juliet, or even the Sonnets, or the Ode to a Nightingale, or the Eve of St. Agnes, at the bidding of any number of Moody and Sankeys. How can we justify our prejudices, or can they be justified, without admitting that the obligations of the moral law cease in the region of art, as the obligation of the Fourth Commandment is sometimes considered to be limited by the English Channel?

Let us first get rid of one or two confusing associations. The theory, as thus stated, does not assert that art should never be moral, but that this is an artistic sphere which lies, so to speak, outside of morality. If the poetry of Keats were directly demoralising, it would be condemned by our previous statements. The allegation is, in fact, that it is neither moral nor immoral. Richly coloured in an artistic sense, it is of a neutral tint in an ethical sense. Keats introduces us to a region where we do not deny the advantages of virtue, but simply forget that such things as vice and virtue exist. But to limit art to this sphere would be as narrow-minded as to exclude it. If the artist should express every sentiment, he certainly should not omit the noblest. He should provide utterance for the heroic, the patriotic, the social, and the religious, or his field will be limited indeed. Dante, one may assume, was a moralist; or to confine ourselves to English literature, men like Milton, and Wordsworth, and Cowper were moralists; nobody can love Scott who does not assimilate his most manly morality. All our great novelists, indeed, were moralists. "Richardson," says old Johnson, "taught the passions to move at the command of virtue." Fielding can scarcely tell his story sometimes for moralising; and Dickens is perhaps too deliberately moral. Pope was

almost exclusively a moralist ; and Pope's boast that he "moralised his song" is adopted verbally from Spenser, whose great poem is formally intended to be an ethical treatise. Some of these great men lug in their morality rather awkwardly, and forget that a poet is something different from a preacher. That is a blunder in art ; but the blunder is not that they moralised, but that they moralised in a wrong way. Instead of leaving their readers to be affected by the morality which permeated the whole structure and substance of their poetry, they chose to extract little nuggets of moral platitudes, and so far failed, because taking the most obvious but least effective mode of preaching. It must, moreover, be remembered, in order to avoid misconception, that the effect of a sermon depends as much upon the congregation as upon the preacher. In childish days we have all read *Pilgrim's Progress*, and skipped the good advice and the theological lectures to study the fight with Apollyon and the escape from Doubting Castle. We anticipated the truth of Hazlitt's remark, that if we did not meddle with the allegory, it would not meddle with us. We were content with the concrete symbols, and blind to the hidden meaning. We often contrive to illustrate the method on a larger scale in our later studies. We are as clever at extracting food to suit our tastes as a plant at extracting from the earth the juices which suit its constitution. There are people who, in certain states of mind, could read the Sermon on the Mount and be all the worse for it. The scoffer hardens himself by finding matter for ridicule in the best of preaching ; and *per contra* a good man may sometimes be the better for the repulsion exercised upon him by a wicked book. But we don't praise a drunken Helot because he has incidentally preached a lesson to the young Spartan ; nor condemn a preacher because some of those who came to scoff went away scoffing. The great delight and the main influence of literature consist in this, that, as somebody has said, it brings the reader into contact with the best minds at their best moments. We receive the same advantage from reading Scott's printed words that we should have received from his spoken words. We are put *en rapport* with a great and good man ; and all literature may be thus regarded as forming the electric chain by which the great centres of spiritual force exercise an influence upon a wide circle of their fellow-creatures. There is, moreover, the advantage that whereas in personal communications the best of men are sometimes shy, or sulky, or angry, their books only survive in virtue of embodying their deepest thoughts and best feelings. Nay, it often happens that a book which itself represents some bad feeling may survive and be healthy in its effects upon readers at a distance. Swift's bitter misanthropy was in itself hateful, except so far as it is excusable on the score of mental disease. But, in reading his books, we can share his generous hatred for all cruelty, meanness, and hypocrisy, whilst passing over his frequent brutality or denying that the vices which he assailed were as universal as he assumed. Sterne was probably base in his private life, and affected in his sentimentalism ; but we can be still touched by his pathos and forget the baser elements with

which it was associated. Time—as some moralists have remarked—has a healing influence. It not only allows resentments to decay and griefs to be softened, but it preserves the truths and the grander sentiments embodied in a book to survive, whilst the inferior admixture of falsehood and petty passion ceases to affect us. This is perhaps the main reason why much literature seems to improve by keeping. Contemporaries are interested by the accidents, and posterity by the essence. The truths survive by their own nature; and there is after all a certain harmony between truth and virtue.

The case, then, seems to be pretty clear in the very large sphere in which art has a direct bearing upon the moral sentiments. A man who encourages the baser sentiments is a villain, and a man who encourages the virtuous sentiments is doing a service to his race. The difficulty lies simply in this, that there are a great many sentiments which seem to be neither good nor bad, or are good and bad according to the facts with which they happen to be associated. According to Mr. Matthew Arnold and Mr. Gladstone, the sphere of morality includes seventy-five per cent. of our actions. What are we to say of the remaining twenty-five per cent. which are neither moral nor the reverse, and in which the artist may find a legitimate though not the sole field for his activities? Perhaps, we should say, in the first place, that the doctrine is slightly mis-stated. Every action is good or bad; it tends to increase or diminish the sum of human happiness, and to stimulate or suppress the legitimate play of our emotions. But it is also true that there are a great many actions in regard to which we cannot lay down any definite rule, and where people must therefore be allowed to follow their instincts. We take out our moral code now and then to frame a general plan of life, or to decide a particular case of conscience. But nobody who is wise will encourage the habit unreservedly, or his conscience will soon become a mere mass of morbid scruples. The general outline of his course will be fixed by reference to his sense of duty; but he will leave hours for play, and admit trifling divergences to right or left, according to the caprice of the moment. And this will be especially the case in regard to his artistic impulses. In such cases the law of duty coincides with the law of pleasure. A man is right, within certain limits, to do what he pleases. He is right, if he enjoys music, to attend a concert; and, if he prefers reading, to take up a novel. It is he who is responsible, and not the artist. If the novelist has written a story which may amuse his readers without doing them an injury, it is not his fault if an idle boy chooses to pore over the story when he ought to be working at arithmetic. He is no more to be condemned than the mathematician is to be condemned because another lad has chosen to overwork his brain with obscure problems, when he might more profitably have been playing a cricket-match. The ethical question concerns the reader, and not the writer. It is a legitimate and a curious question how far a man should indulge himself in purely æsthetic enjoyments; at what point a delight in the beautiful begins to enervate the character,

and up to what point it exerts a healthy and elevating influence. But that has nothing to do with the morality of the artist. If the poetry of Keats reflects a mood of mind not in itself unhealthy, it is not Keats's fault if some people dream over his verses till they forget that there are narrow limits after which indulgence in such sentiment becomes injurious. And, therefore, we may say at once that no artist is to be condemned because the good tonic which he has provided may be converted into a poison by injudicious use. We may laugh with Falstaff and be all the better for it, though we should be very much the worse if we took his views of honour as a serious code of practice. It is as possible to extract mischief from things pure as to extract good from things evil.

In this sense, then, we may say of much art as we may say of food or of scientific knowledge, that it is in itself neither good nor bad. It may be a poison or a medicine. Its action depends upon the condition of the patient. You may use the art of cookery or the principles of natural philosophy to kill your neighbour; you may use the poet's fire to kindle passions when they ought to be checked, or check them when they ought to be kindled. The poet, in other words, is a force which may be turned to strengthen or to weaken the character. When, for example, Burns attacked the hypocrisy of certain Pharisees in Ayr, you may catch from him a contempt for sanctified impostors, or a contempt for some of the best men that ever lived. Further, as it is of the essence of all forms of art that it should be the perfectly spontaneous expression of the sentiments generated in the artist by the world in which he lives and the fellow-creatures who inhabit it, we may add that he should not hamper himself by thinking too nicely of possible applications of his work. He may, like Luther, express his love of wine, women, and song without troubling himself to reflect that corrupt minds will turn the worship of the best things in the world to the worship of the worst. All this is true; though, as it need hardly be remarked, by no means relevant as a justification of immoral art. Because a man may give the frankest utterance to all natural and healthy emotions, it does not follow that he may deliberately confound right and wrong, or help to associate beautiful with impure fancies. Hatred of hypocrisy is an excellent sentiment, though often misapplied. Scorn for the religious emotions is a detestable feeling, however applied.

But there is another consideration to be noted. There are many great imaginative writers of whom we are apt to be told that their tendency is purely neutral in a moral aspect. Shakspeare, it may be said, was neither moral nor immoral; though M. Taine has spoken of his profound immorality. If M. Taine was right, Shakspeare's works ought to be burnt. We may shrink from the conclusion, but we cannot avoid it logically, if the fact be true, or any intelligible meaning be given to the word "ought." We prefer to deny the facts. Nobody, we say, is the worse for reading *Hamlet* or *Henry IV.*, or even the Sonnets and the Poems. And yet we admit that we can't extract any edifying morality from those marvellous

performances. How are the two views to be reconciled? If Shakspeare was immoral or even non-moral, how can we be the better for associating with him? The answer, which cannot be given in a phrase, may be briefly indicated. To sum up Shakspeare's morality, or to decide whether it is a good or a bad morality, would be a task for which very few men are competent. Upon that question it is needless to give any opinion whatever. It is easy to show that, in any case, Shakspeare does, in fact, preach a morality—good or bad—and preaches it with extraordinary force. It is very difficult to say whether a poet preaches good or bad sermons, because his poems do not give a series of rules explicitly, but hold certain moral ideas in solution. He does not force definite propositions upon our intellects, but catches our sympathies by an indefinable sympathy. A critic may analyze the doctrines which are embodied in the imaginative symbols; but the doctrines themselves are too vague to be easily grasped, and were probably never present to the consciousness of the artist. We have to translate the logic of sentiment into the logic of definite propositions; and that is the most delicate process which is very apt to lead into the grossest blunders. It is, however, a conceivable process; for though philosophy and poetry are two very different things, every poetry deserving the name implies the presence of certain modes of conception which only require systematic analysis to be turned into philosophy. Shakspeare simply paints the world as he saw it; but then the way in which he saw it defines at once his special idiosyncrasy and his—partly unconscious—philosophy. Thus, for example, Shakspeare has a characteristic view of the world in which we live. Nobody ever felt more keenly or expressed more powerfully the thought which is more or less common to all moralists, that we live in a little island of light amidst a universe of mystery. We are such stuff as dreams are made of; our little lives are rounded with a sleep: these and many more familiar phrases are expressions of a sentiment which is felt by great men in proportion to their greatness. But, as the thought is common to many different schools, to the sensualist and the cynic as well as to the ascetic and the mystic, it may be said to be of a neutral moral tint. We must, then, go a little further. Shakspeare will tell us also what it is that gives him comfort in this strange changing and shifting of the whole visible world. Does he dwell most fondly upon the religious or the philanthropic or the sentimental or the purely sensual modes of relieving our sorrows and weariness? He gives us, you reply, men and women of all types; Falstaff and Hamlet and Iago and Henry V. and Cleopatra and Coriolanus and Timon of Athens. We cannot tell which he admires most, for he paints them all with equal sympathy, and makes us sympathise equally with all. But he is forced to go further than this. He has a psychology as well as a philosophy. Each play may be taken as the solution of a problem suggested by an impressive story. What is the nature of your Falstaff or your Hamlet? What are the qualities which make a man a jovial companion, or fit or unfit him to deal with a tremendous family complication, or to carry out a diabolical plot, or to suppress an

and up to what point it exerts a healthy and elevating influence. But that has nothing to do with the morality of the artist. If the poetry of Keats reflects a mood of mind not in itself unhealthy, it is not Keats's fault if some people dream over his verses till they forget that there are narrow limits after which indulgence in such sentiment becomes injurious. And, therefore, we may say at once that no artist is to be condemned because the good tonic which he has provided may be converted into a poison by injudicious use. We may laugh with Falstaff and be all the better for it, though we should be very much the worse if we took his views of honour as a serious code of practice. It is as possible to extract mischief from things pure as to extract good from things evil.

In this sense, then, we may say of much art as we may say of food or of scientific knowledge, that it is in itself neither good nor bad. It may be a poison or a medicine. Its action depends upon the condition of the patient. You may use the art of cookery or the principles of natural philosophy to kill your neighbour; you may use the poet's fire to kindle passions when they ought to be checked, or check them when they ought to be kindled. The poet, in other words, is a force which may be turned to strengthen or to weaken the character. When, for example, Burns attacked the hypocrisy of certain Pharisees in Ayr, you may catch from him a contempt for sanctified impostors, or a contempt for some of the best men that ever lived. Further, as it is of the essence of all forms of art that it should be the perfectly spontaneous expression of the sentiments generated in the artist by the world in which he lives and the fellow-creatures who inhabit it, we may add that he should not hamper himself by thinking too nicely of possible applications of his work. He may, like Luther, express his love of wine, women, and song without troubling himself to reflect that corrupt minds will turn the worship of the best things in the world to the worship of the worst. All this is true; though, as it need hardly be remarked, by no means relevant as a justification of immoral art. Because a man may give the frankest utterance to all natural and healthy emotions, it does not follow that he may deliberately confound right and wrong, or help to associate beautiful with impure fancies. Hatred of hypocrisy is an excellent sentiment, though often misapplied. Scorn for the religious emotions is a detestable feeling, however applied.

But there is another consideration to be noted. There are many great imaginative writers of whom we are apt to be told that their tendency is purely neutral in a moral aspect. Shakspeare, it may be said, was neither moral nor immoral; though M. Taine has spoken of his profound immorality. If M. Taine was right, Shakspeare's works ought to be burnt. We may shrink from the conclusion, but we cannot avoid it logically, if the fact be true, or any intelligible meaning be given to the word "ought." We prefer to deny the facts. Nobody, we say, is the worse for reading *Hamlet* or *Henry IV.*, or even the Sonnets and the Poems. And yet we admit that we can't extract any edifying morality from those marvellous

performances. How are the two views to be reconciled? If Shakspeare was immoral or even non-moral, how can we be the better for associating with him? The answer, which cannot be given in a phrase, may be briefly indicated. To sum up Shakspeare's morality, or to decide whether it is a good or a bad morality, would be a task for which very few men are competent. Upon that question it is needless to give any opinion whatever. It is easy to show that, in any case, Shakspeare does, in fact, preach a morality—good or bad—and preaches it with extraordinary force. It is very difficult to say whether a poet preaches good or bad sermons, because his poems do not give a series of rules explicitly, but hold certain moral ideas in solution. He does not force definite propositions upon our intellects, but catches our sympathies by an indefinable sympathy. A critic may analyze the doctrines which are embodied in the imaginative symbols; but the doctrines themselves are too vague to be easily grasped, and were probably never present to the consciousness of the artist. We have to translate the logic of sentiment into the logic of definite propositions; and that is the most delicate process which is very apt to lead into the grossest blunders. It is, however, a conceivable process; for though philosophy and poetry are two very different things, every poetry deserving the name implies the presence of certain modes of conception which only require systematic analysis to be turned into philosophy. Shakspeare simply paints the world as he saw it; but then the way in which he saw it defines at once his special idiosyncrasy and his—partly unconscious—philosophy. Thus, for example, Shakspeare has a characteristic view of the world in which we live. Nobody ever felt more keenly or expressed more powerfully the thought which is more or less common to all moralists, that we live in a little island of light amidst a universe of mystery. We are such stuff as dreams are made of; our little lives are rounded with a sleep: these and many more familiar phrases are expressions of a sentiment which is felt by great men in proportion to their greatness. But, as the thought is common to many different schools, to the sensualist and the cynic as well as to the ascetic and the mystic, it may be said to be of a neutral moral tint. We must, then, go a little further. Shakspeare will tell us also what it is that gives him comfort in this strange changing and shifting of the whole visible world. Does he dwell most fondly upon the religious or the philanthropic or the sentimental or the purely sensual modes of relieving our sorrows and weariness? He gives us, you reply, men and women of all types; Falstaff and Hamlet and Iago and Henry V. and Cleopatra and Coriolanus and Timon of Athens. We cannot tell which he admires most, for he paints them all with equal sympathy, and makes us sympathise equally with all. But he is forced to go further than this. He has a psychology as well as a philosophy. Each play may be taken as the solution of a problem suggested by an impressive story. What is the nature of your Falstaff or your Hamlet? What are the qualities which make a man a jovial companion, or fit or unfit him to deal with a tremendous family complication, or to carry out a diabolical plot, or to suppress an

unruly mob? Is misanthropy the natural tendency of a noble nature, or caused by some unfortunate perversion of character? Is purity of character an amiable or a contemptible or narrow quality? Each of Shakspeare's characters would serve, in proportion as he has realised them vividly, for an impressive sermon upon the mode in which certain propensities tend to strengthen or to disintegrate the moral character. To sum up the Shakspearean conclusions would undoubtedly be most difficult; but if he was—as we may, perhaps, assume—a keen and consistent observer, the conclusions might be drawn, and when put into shape would form a moral code. What is the world in which we live? What is the nature of the men who live in it? What are the characters and modes of life most productive of misery or happiness? Answer those questions, and you have your moral code. Shakspeare only answers them by vivid imaginative symbols; as your Bentham or Butler answers them in a set of abstract logical formulæ. The Shakspearean method is not the less effective because the doctrines are insinuated into the mind in disguise, instead of openly taking it by storm, with the whole apparatus of trenches and catapults in the shape of demonstrations and inferences.

But is the morality sound or the art valuable in proportion as it is sound? Whether the Shakspearean morality be sound is a question not here to be asked. But we may say that the decision would turn upon the further question of whether Shakspeare was, on the whole, a man of morbid or healthy mind. That he, like everybody else, had many morbid tendencies is abundantly clear. Whether the morbid tendencies be those which predominate in his work and colour his morality is a different problem. There are people who prefer the morbid products, and who think that a great writer must necessarily be morbid; and this is the real question which underlies most of the controversy. The atom of truth which underlies a great deal of nonsense is probably contained in the simple proposition that a man of the keen sensibility which makes him a genius is specially liable to some diseases of the mind; and from this it is inferred that the disease is the essence, and the healthy sentiment the superfluous accident. We may be content with stating what seems to be a more reasonable conclusion. The poet and the great artist of every kind partly expresses his own sentiments, and is partly the mouthpiece of the social order of which he forms a part. The greatest art is only produced in periods when some strong intellectual or social impulse is stirring the foundations of the established order. That, as all admit, was the explanation in general terms of the poetic outbursts in the Elizabethan and revolutionary periods. So far, then, as the art is the imaginative projection of the great forces which are renovating or developing society, whether the forces be intellectual or social, it is healthy and admirable. A delight in the beauty of human beings or external nature is in itself a healthy sentiment, though it may be accidentally associated with baser elements. So far as the poet is himself a man of healthy nature and powerful mind, he will be qualified to act as a mouthpiece of the forces which make for good, and to intensify their

action. He may be embittered by the difference between his ideal and the actual; his love of beauty or his strong capacity for pleasure may partially pervert his character; and he may be himself utterly unconscious of anything beyond his immediate purpose of expressing overpowering emotions. Many sickly and wrong-minded and immoral men may unknowingly co-operate with the powers of good. But whatever is morbid in them is so far a disadvantage, though it may be a collateral result from the excessive development of certain natural gifts.

We need not, then, ask in all cases whether a poet or a poem is moral, only because we have to ask a wider question. Is it, on the whole, an expression of sentiments developed by the invigorating and regenerating processes? Morality, on one side at least, is nothing but the system of rules laid down to secure the healthy growth of the social organism. Every impulse which comes into conflict with these rules must therefore of necessity be pernicious and morbid. No possible excuse can be valid for transgressing them. But the rules generally express the negative conditions, and are necessarily limited in their scope, because in many cases the instincts are a better guide than a tabulated series of rigid directions. We do not think it necessary to order a man to eat when he is hungry; and we leave him to choose of two harmless pleasures that which he sincerely prefers. Poetry, therefore, which is capable of expressing all human emotions very often expresses them in cases where no moral rule can be applied. We may, in that sense, say that it may and ought to be extramoral, though not immoral. But in every case, without exception, it should stimulate the healthy, not the morbid emotions; and, in that sense, all art and poetry should be moral and even didactic, though it generally sets before us symbols of the innocent and ennobling sentiments instead of formally deducing them from logical axioms. Novels with a purpose are proverbially detestable, for a novel with a purpose means a book setting forth that a villain is hanged and a good man presented with a thousand pounds—that is silly and really immoral; for, in the first place, the imaginary event is no guarantee for the real event; secondly, a particular case does not prove a rule; thirdly, it is not true that virtue is always rewarded and vice punished; and fourthly, virtue should not be inculcated with a simple view to money or the gallows. But even a novel should have a ruling thought, though it should not degenerate into a tract; and the thought should be one which will help to purify and sustain the mind by which it is assimilated, and therefore tend to make society so far healthier and happier.

The Septic : a Tale of Married Life.

I.

MIDDAY Mass being ended in the church of St. Wolfram, of the town of A—, the holy building was emptied of all its worshippers, excepting some twenty ladies, who grouped themselves on rush-chairs near the different confessionals. It was a Friday, and there were consequently no weddings. The penitents had the church all to themselves, and the solemn silence was eminently suited to pious meditation. However, the penitents being for the most part old spinsters, preferred to chatter in whispers; confession was to them a refreshing break in the week's solitary idleness, and they made the most of it.

Truth compels one to admit that the ladies were unequally distributed, for not less than twelve out of the twenty were gathered round the confessional of l'Abbé Mouillot. But you had only to look at this comely priest waddling across the aisle from the sacristy to understand how great a favourite he must needs be. He was plump and rosy, and his silvery hair, which fluffed over his smooth forehead, crowned a face in which dimples and benevolence had an equal part with serenity and playful humour. No man had more indulgence than he for little sins or large ones. His gentle chiding brought greater comfort than the absolution of other priests; and, what is more, he was possessed of inexhaustible patience—hurrying no one, suffering his penitents to disclose their sins in their own way, and only encouraging them with a kindly word when, by a pause of undue length, they seemed to appeal for it. We must decline to entertain the supposition that if l'Abbé Mouillot sat out long confessions so obligingly it was because he dropped off placidly to sleep at their commencement. The Abbé having entered his confessional and closed the door, the lady first on the rank stepped out and knelt in one of the lateral boxes, and the remainder, feigning to keep their eyes on their missals, settled down to comfortable tattle.

"That's the Colonel's sister," remarked one spinster.

"If she confess but half what is on her conscience, we shall have to wait an hour," mumbled a second, and both tittered.

At this moment the folding doors of the church were softly pushed back, and a feminine form glided towards the holy-water basin. In the dim light of the entrance it could be seen that she was attired with more taste and richness than are usual in country towns, and that she wore a veil. Approaching the confessional, she lifted the veil, and then a murmur of astonishment and curiosity ran round.

"It is Madame Paul d'Arley!"

"Oh, oh! her husband has renounced the devil then!"

"What can have brought her two leagues to confession? There is a good church enough at St. Riequier."

"And see how flurried she looks! One may guess her two years' honeymoon has been chequered with a cloud at last."

"Dear Madame d'Arley, how delighted we are to see you looking so fresh and lovely! We hope your dear husband and child are quite well."

The lady thus addressed with evident respect, and for whom all the penitents made way, was the wife of Paul d'Arley, one of the greatest of French novelists and playwrights. He had achieved his brilliant reputation when young, and it had increased with every new work he produced, because he wrote little, and for fame, not profit. At forty, having just been elected—some ten years before the customary age—to the French Academy, he had astonished everybody by marrying a pretty dowerless girl of twenty, the daughter of a country gentleman, and since his marriage he had lived a retired life on a little estate which he had bought near St. Riequier. He was so distinguished a man that the families around felt honoured by his settling among them, but it was deemed singular that he should break so completely with Parisian society, which had idolized him, and it was thought stranger still that, sceptic as he was, he should have married into a family remarkable for religious devoutness. Paul d'Arley was, indeed, considerably more than a sceptic: he had been called the successor of Voltaire. He was an atheist of the aggressive sort, who had never feigned conformity, as most of his countrymen do, but who, like Edmond About, Emile Augier, and Ste. Beuve, had missed no occasion of assailing the Catholic Church with irony and bitterly contemptuous ridicule. Every one of his works had been banned by the Papal Index, much to his amusement, and his last book, published about a year before his marriage, had attained a success of startling proportions, by being denounced in episcopal mandates throughout every diocese in France. It was conceivable that after this a devout Catholic should have given his daughter to Paul d'Arley, in the hope that marriage might reclaim him; but it was inconceivable that the renowned author should have been impelled to his ill-assorted marriage, unless it were from the fascination of Aimée Deschamps' pretty face.

People generally accepted this explanation, for Madame d'Arley's was just one of those faces that turn men's heads. Small and daintily rounded, she had large soft blue eyes, rich and wavy chestnut hair, and an adorable little mouth, over which a sweet smile was always playing like sunlight. There was no particular expression on her features but that of amiability. She looked good and weak; unable to say no, and not very sure whether she ought to say yes. A physiognomist would not have expected intellect from her, and yet it would have surprised anybody to see her do or say anything that was foolish. She was a Frenchwoman to her finger tips; dressed and walked well; carried herself without embarrassment or effron-

tery; had little graces of gesture, glance, and manner, which proved consciousness of always having admiring or critical eyes bent on her; and summed up in her attractive person all the outward perfections of the gentlewoman. She had been agitated on entering the church, but it was good to see how, in the presence of older members of her sex, she at once resumed her composure; gave to each the bow and civil word that was correct, and took her place modestly on the furthest chair to wait her turn.

She would have to wait long if deference for her husband's celebrity, and perhaps inquisitiveness to see how the wife of so eminent a reprobate would demean herself at the tribunal of penitence, had not induced the other ladies to waive their precedence. When the Colonel's sister had finished—and to do this lady justice, she had settled her little account with Heaven in half-an-hour—the next lady motioned to Madame d'Arley, and the others ratified this arrangement by polite smirks. Madame d'Arley reddened a little as she accepted the courtesy, but it was manifestly very welcome to her, and gracefully bowing her acknowledgments, she passed into the confessional and dropped on her knees. Then she heaved a sigh.

"Father, it is I, Madame d'Arley," she whispered through the grating. "I told you the other day that I wished to consult you on something very important, and I have taken advantage of my husband being absent on a visit to drive into A——."

"It will give me pleasure to hear you, my daughter," answered the priest's kind voice. "When I last dined at your charming house I noticed that you were pre-occupied, but I have been hoping that your little troubles were more imaginary than real."

"Oh, Father, they are not little troubles—no woman was ever so unhappy as I am!" moaned Madame d'Arley. "I am devoured by the sin of curiosity; it leaves me no peace; it will make me ill before long if I do not yield to it. Can you fancy that, although I have been married two years, my husband will not allow me to read one of his books!"

"Ah!"

"No, he forbids me. There is not a copy of his works in our house—if friends come to see us, he contrives to change the conversation as soon as it turns on his writings, and if I question him myself, he closes my lips with a joke. He is so affectionate and gentle that I bore with this for a time, though it cost me many a pang, but latterly we have been visited by that Madame de Marceuil whom you saw at our table the other night—a young widow, very forward and ill-natured, who I am sure wanted to marry Paul, and who takes a delight in making me miserable."

"Come, come, my daughter——"

"Ah, but it's true, else why should she compliment me so tauntingly on not having read my own husband's books? She has an aggravating way about her which makes a woman's blood tingle. She recurs to the subject at all hours; hinting that the books are full of attacks on

religion, immoral, abounding in details about Paul's early life ; and that my husband and I are both acting very properly, he in forbidding me to read them, I in obeying him. Was there ever a more humiliating position for a wife ? So I am to be the only woman in France who is not to know the writings which have made my Paul's reputation, and our boy, who will grow up to glory in his father's name, will pore over books which his mother has never opened ! Tell me, Father, that I may go and buy the works to read in private, for I feel I am being treated like a child."

Now l'Abbé Mouillot was not one of those priests who creep into houses and lead captive silly women. He was an honest man, who, perhaps because he was a little dull, had never understood that spiritual fervour should impel a priest to put man and wife asunder. He had not read Paul d'Arley's excommunicated books, but had heard of them, and well guessed why their author should object to let such dangerous literature be perused by a young and innocent wife, on whom he doted. There are well-meaning priests who would have advised Aimée d'Arley by all means to read the books, and to try persistently to convert her husband, in order that he might write no more like them. But l'Abbé Mouillot knew what perils lurk under such injudicious counsels. He had received courtesy and kindness from Paul d'Arley, respected his honourable character, could not help revering his genius, and the advice which he gave to the author's wife was that of a friend and peacemaker.

"My daughter, your first duty is to obey your husband," he said with gentle firmness. "Admitting that M. d'Arley does not share your faith, our good God has ways of His own for bringing back his lost sheep, and a wife should be an instrument of happiness in her household, not contention."

"But it is so hard to be told that one's husband has written this and that, and not to be able to join with people in their admiration or rebut their criticisms."

"It is a trial, but wait patiently. Your husband will, no doubt, end by removing his prohibition, and you will be the more contented then for having passed submissively through your ordeal."

"You have no pity for me," murmured Aimée. "It may be years before my husband relents, and Mdme. de Marceuil says the books are so interesting !"

"Heigh, there we have it," exclaimed the priest, whose voice betokened that he was smiling. "The serpent has tempted you to eat of the tree of knowledge of Good and Evil, and, after exhausting ingenious reasons for succumbing, you are obliged to confess the true one. Go home, my dear daughter, and read in the 3rd chapter of Genesis what the sin of curiosity and disobedience cost our first mother. Your home is a little paradise—see that you do not throw away its tranquil joys."

Mdme. d'Arley rose from her knees, looking calm ; but her body was in a fever. She had hoped the priest would ratify the sophistries she had formed to justify her in disobeying, and his refusing to do so added to the

irritation of her nerves without allaying any of the desires that seethed in her mind. She had been too much petted not to resent any crossing of her wishes as an unkindness, and if it had not been for the sacredness of the spot she would have burst out crying.

The sun was shining gloriously, and the streets were full of mid-day bustle as she emerged from the church and made her way with quick steps towards the market-place, where her carriage was waiting. But why, instead of crossing the market-place, did she abruptly pause and turn, reddening, down a side-street? There was a bookseller's shop a few doors down, and in the window was conspicuously displayed a yellow placard, advertising in red and black letters the "Complete works of Paul d'Arley, of the French Academy."

There they were, the works—four novels and five plays—in bright new covers, pink and primrose, with titles alluring enough to open the eyes of a blind man.

Aimée's bosom heaved fast, and the throbbings of her heart became physically painful. Once—twice she turned away and retraced her steps. The third time a customer was coming out of the shop, and fancying she was about to enter, stood aside to let her pass; here was the temptation: she seized it and walked in.

"Have you *all* Paul d'Arley's works?"

"Yes, Madame; the last editions have just come from Paris."

"I will buy the complete set, please," said Aimée, in a voice that quavered.

II.

"The Elms," Paul d'Arley's country seat—within bowshot of the ancient abbey-town of St. Riequier, now dwindled into a village—was dignified, like most French country houses, with the title of *château*. It was a pretty, modern mansion, nestling amid clumps of the trees from which the estate derived its name, and surrounded by an expanse of lawn and shrubberies, which was large or small according as you called it garden or park. Mme. d'Arley insisted it was a park; the author styled it *jardinnet* (diminutive garden), and similar contestations went on between them as to the correct appellations of a conservatory and dovecot, which Aimée was for dubbing Orangery and Tower respectively, while her incredulous husband submitted that he would take up with these names when the one had produced an orange and the other stood a siege.

Such as it was, Paul d'Arley loved the place well. Those who wondered that he should settle so contentedly in retirement had little knowledge of his character, and less understanding of the satiety which comes of long indulgence in the pleasures of big cities. D'Arley had lived for twenty years in the most brilliant society in Paris—the equal of princes and statesmen, the pet of great ladies, actresses, and artists, the envy of tyros. Few men had enjoyed life as he had, or better deserved to enjoy it; for he had carved his way to fame and fortune without patronage or

charlatanry, by mere dint of hard toil and talent. Every work he had produced, whether novel or play, had cost him more than two years' reflection and assiduous labour; and lest this should seem strange to fertile literary manufacturers in these our times, it may be added that d'Arley had received repeated offers of large sums to work faster, but had declined, alleging rather scornfully that he would print nothing that could not be bequeathed to posterity.

To do his country neighbours justice, there was little in the great author's works to encourage a belief that he would ever develop into a family man; for he had been a contemner of marriage. He had, in fact, derided most things which the simple reverence. Taking exceptional, and often morbid, passions for his texts, he had employed the resources of incomparable style, masterly perception of character, dramatic power and descriptive facility unrivalled, to defend—nay extol—offences against what the world terms morals, and he social prejudices. France is the only country where theories such as his durst be published, and even Frenchmen, so tolerant of startling paradoxes, would not have brooked from an author of less genius philosophy so deliberately cynical and axioms insultingly launched against all the conventions that hold society together. What saved Paul d'Arley was, next to his talent, his evident good faith, and for this reason no one would have applied an epithet of reprobation to his works. They were books over which thinkers pondered, and which *dilettanti* studied as splendid works of art. But to the vulgar they were poison, and d'Arley knew this so well that from the day of his marriage he had taken the most careful precaution that his wife should not read them.

For the truth is, he deeply loved his fair young wife. After draining the intoxicating cup of worldly excitements he had discovered that there is in domestic happiness a greater joy than all, and he was sincerely grateful to the woman who had revealed this to him. Her gods were not his, but in the practices of her innocent devotions he found a secret charm stirring the innermost chords of his heart. When she knelt down to say her prayers at night, and invoke blessings on his head—when she set out in cold or rain to church, or conformed to the laws of her religion as to fasting—when he saw her act at all times as if an invisible eye were controlling her conduct, it was as if some beautiful scene of poetical legendry were being performed before him. She did not know how often he shaded his eyes to watch her making the sign of the cross, nor divine what was passing in his mind when he would sit down beside her, and, taking her hands in his, ask her to relate him some stories from her Bible. He did not believe in these things. To him they were fables, silly or sublime; but not for the world would he have shaken his wife's faith in them; and gradually there had grown up in him a feeling that he would rather his son, and any other children he might have, should grow up to be god-fearing like their mother than infidels like himself. He looked forward to an age when mankind should be guided wholly by reason; but felt that this age had not yet come—for his wife.

So he lived happy, falsifying all conjectures, puzzling every observer. He was a handsome man, rather above the middle height, a little bald and shortsighted, but constitutionally strong, thanks to regular diet and exercise. With his waxed moustache, high forehead, and firm chin he looked like a soldier. His face teemed with expression, but the expression was not soft, for like all men who have been much criticised he was a trifle arrogant, and the easy rapidity of his rise in life made him speak with too much contempt of those who had been less fortunate than himself. He would not admit that he owed anything to exceptional abilities. He said it was only hard work that had made him; and one of his grievances against religion was that it taught men to rely on idle supplications rather than on the courageous self-exertions which he for his own part had found enough to conquer all difficulties. It was not surprising that such a man should have earned a character for hardness and pride, and yet never did a man yield himself more good-humouredly to the domination of a young wife. His tenderness, playful gentleness, and cheerful submission to all her wishes were things to see; the little woman had wholly subjugated him, and not until two years after his marriage did he leave her for a single day. It was a summons to the bedside of a relative who was thought to be dying which had induced him very reluctantly to quit her at last, and which had also afforded Aimée the opportunity of going to A—— and buying his books, as we have seen. Paul d'Arley had counted on being away three days; he was compelled to remain absent more than three weeks, and when he was at last free to return he travelled back to St. Riequier with a yearning impatience to resume the peaceful life to which this brief interruption had but added new charms.

But he had no sooner set foot in his house than he perceived some great change had occurred.

It was Ash Wednesday, and Paul, as he journeyed in the train, had been telling himself with pathetic amusement that he should find his wife in a black dress—for like a good Catholic she wore dark attire on fast days—and be regaled with a fish dinner. But Aimée came to the door and met him, tricked out in silks and colours, and with her hair piled up in some extraordinary Parisian fashion. There was more of the woman, less of the wife and mother in her, and she seemed excited, though her greeting was gushingly affectionate. When Paul went upstairs to change his dress, he noticed in passing through his wife's room that the crucifix which used to hang over the bed had been removed, but thinking it might be in repair he paid little attention. When, however, on coming downstairs he found the dining-room ablaze with wax-candles, the table decked with flowers, and a prettily written *menu* of rich dainties lying beside his glass, he was astonished and glanced at Aimée. She was sitting red and nervous, as if playing a part.

"My dear child, you must have mislaid your almanack," he said, smiling. "This is a fast day."

"Yes, dear, I know it is," replied Aimée, in a voice that slightly trembled.

"Well, but we shall both be excommunicated together. Has our good bishop given you an indulgence?"

"What need of indulgences, Paul? I agree with you that it is time women shook off the superstitions which pervert all enjoyment of the good things of life into sins."

There was a moment's silence. Paul d'Arley had turned white as the tablecloth, and motioned to the servant to retire.

"I am not aware that I ever told you that, Aimée."

"No, but you have written it—and oh, Paul, don't be angry with me, but I have been reading all your books!" She crossed the room, and threw herself at his feet, embracing him with both her arms and gazing into his face with endearing entreaty. "I could not resist any longer, darling, and I know now why you kept your writings from me, fearing I should be too childish to understand them. But do not dread that. Some of the things frightened me at first and made me cry, but as I went on reading the scales dropped off my eyes. Oh, how silly you must have thought me with my little mummeries and foolish creeds—but you are so great, noble, and good, and never let me see what you thought in your tender unwillingness to wound me! Why are you trembling, dearest? I mean to be your own wife now, the sharer of your glory and of all your thoughts. Everything that I had learned has been clean sponged away, and my heart and mind are like the blank pages of a new book on which you shall write what beliefs you please. Look up at me, dearest. I never knew how much I loved you till I guessed from your works what a sacrifice you had made in marrying a silly little thing like me!"

Words cannot depict the desolate expression that had settled on Paul d'Arley's face as his wife spoke. He had started to his feet mechanically, assisting her to rise, and she recoiled at seeing him stand speechless, as if an irremediable catastrophe had overtaken him. When he spoke at length it was with a groan.

"Tell me the truth, Aimée: it was Madame de Marceuil who lent you those books?"

"No, no, Paul; I went into the town and bought them myself. But why do you look at me like that, dear? You frighten me."

"Unhappy child! I am sure it was Madame de Marceuil who advised you to buy them," he murmured; then abruptly he tossed his head and broke out with a wrath that was awful: "Woe betide that woman! She has come into my house with a torch, and let her see to herself! I will wreak a vengeance on her that shall wring ten thousand tears from her eyes for every one that she has made you shed."

Aimée uttered a cry and attempted to restrain her husband; but he disengaged himself, rushed from the room and hurried to the stables. The groom who was there thought his master had gone mad, for Paul shouted for a saddle, helped to strap it on, and before the bit was fairly

in the horse's mouth sprang into the stirrups and spurred into the night at full gallop. He rode towards the house where Madame de Marceuil lived, about five miles off, and some of the tardy peasants who met him on the road must have thought of him as the groom did—or that he was possessed of the devil, for they were pious people in those parts.

Madame de Marceuil was far from expecting such a visit. She was a handsome young widow, thoroughly Parisian, cool, coquettish, and heartless. Married early to a man old enough to be her grandfather, she had hailed her widowhood as a merciful release, and had lost no time in setting her cap at Paul d'Arley, whose fame, polished manners, and manly character had fascinated her. But it was not out of spite at having been rebuffed by him that she had tried to push his wife to disobedience. Madame de Marceuil was one of those women who do harm by nature, as nettles sting. To tattle and invent scandal, to estrange wife from husband, and lend a hand to intrigues in which the honour of families was blasted, were to her mere pastimes. As to connubial relations, she had a theory that among men there is not one but that is peccant, and she argued that women owe each other mutual protection to resist marital tyranny. This did not prevent her abusing her own sex in the hearing of men and despising it cordially in secret.

It chanced that when Paul d'Arley arrived Madame de Marceuil was reading one of his best novels, *La Femme d'un Sot*, which she had perused many times from detecting several comforting analogies between herself and the heroine. She gave a start at hearing the door-bell violently clang; but before she could run to the window Paul had darted into the room, covered with mud, breathless and menacing. Without taking off his hat he rushed to her and seized her frail wrists as if he would break them.

"Wretched woman, what infernal spirit of mischief led you to disturb my wife's mind with those books of mine?"

"Don't, Monsieur d'Arley, you're hurting me!" she cried in terror. "I never advised Madame d'Arley to read your books."

"You are lying!" he raved. "When I suffered you to visit my wife I warned you of the conditions on which alone you might do it. I mistrusted your viperous tongue from the first."

Madame de Marceuil's features had blanched under Paul's flaming eyes. She struggled, panting, to free herself.

"I tell you to release me, Sir, or I shall scream. I never did more than mention your books to your wife."

"Ah, that's it!" shouted Paul, pushing her back so roughly that she staggered. "You went in your hateful malice and excited her curiosity; but what have you given the poor little thing in exchange for that faith you destroyed in her? Could you endow her with the strong mind of a man to enable her to replace by unwavering reason the comfort which her religion brought her in every hour of trial? No; you never had such a thought; but in trying to soil the child's angel robe you only aimed at

making her a demon of worldliness and depravity like yourself! But now quail—for as I am a living man you shall repent of what you have done! I will write a book, and expose you in it by name as in a pillory; and you shall become so infamous that the lowest of your sex shall point their fingers at you!”

Madame de Marceuil bounded under this brutal threat.

“Ah, this is too much!” she exclaimed. “Your wife has been perverted by your books. Well, I am glad of it! This is the retribution on you for the misery of thousands of other women whom your books have ruined. There was a time when I too believed that there was another world where the wretchedness of this life was compensated; but you and others like you, who are the perdition of our country, scoffed these illusions away, and what did you give me in exchange but the fine philosophy that as we have nothing to live for, nothing to hope for, we should be stupid indeed not to get what pleasure we can out of this world? Ah! so you think to shatter the cross in every household, and then to plant it as a talisman on your own hearth. But there is some justice yet! You have thrown your impious books at God, and he has hurled them back on your roof-tree. So much the better!” and darting to the bell she pulled it. A servant appeared. “Show out M. d’Arley,” she cried.

III.

Not long after this the Paris papers announced that Paul d’Arley and his charming young wife had taken a house in the Champs Elysées and were coming to spend a few months there. As the private lives of great authors offer an engrossing interest to the French public, minutely accurate accounts were given of the Hôtel d’Arley, and of Paul’s reasons for hiring it. It was said that so Parisian a writer could not languish away from a city which is to all other cities what the sun is to the planetary system, and that he was impatient to exhibit to the world the winsome little woman who had detained him so long in exile. In the course of a few days cards were issued for Madame d’Arley’s first “at home.”

Few guessed with what anguish Paul had drawn himself away from the “Elms;” and if we say few instead of none, it is because Madame de Marceuil had maliciously bruited the “ridiculous scene” which had taken place at her house, so that there were some who were aware that a skeleton existed in the great author’s family cupboard. Paul had striven hard to undo the evil that had been wrought; and for several days tried everything that patient ingenuity and tender earnestness could suggest to bring back his wife to her discarded beliefs. But Faith is like a temple: when ruined, it can be rebuilt, but not in a week. Aimée was possessed with a burning desire to go to Paris and see her husband’s plays performed on the stage, to hear him applauded, and to feel her heart ring with the echo of his praises. Such a wish could not be combated; and Paul took the only determination possible by resolving to bring his wife to

Paris, and let her taste to her fill of the sensations which she coveted. He hoped that satiety would come to her as it had to him, making her long to renew their peaceful country life; and to hasten this end he decided that their baby should remain at St. Riequier, the air of which was healthier for him than that of the capital.

Aimée flew to Paris like a bird uncaged. Everything in it was new to her, and the people most of all. The d'Arlays had a luxurious house, kept a carriage, a man cook, servants in livery, and all the appurtenances of a mansion where large hospitality is to be exercised. During the first week after their arrival, not scores but hundreds of cards were left at the door; invitations poured in from ministers, princes, nobles, from the lords of art and letters, from everybody with a name or a purse; and then managers and publishers trooped up to the author's dwelling. Since his marriage Paul had finished a five-act comedy and commenced a novel. The comedy was at once accepted by the Théâtre Français and put in rehearsal; the novel was predicted in the papers to be the best he had ever written (though no reporter had obtained a glimpse of it), and the title was given: *Un Mariage d'Amour*. Once more that brazen din which the most art-enamoured public in the world raises round its favourites resounded about Paul d'Arley, and to Aimée this din was music.

She was not stinted of it, nor of anything else she fancied, for Paul was too shrewd to think he could cure any woman of Parisomania if he put the slightest restraint on her pleasure-seeking, and his policy was that of confectioners, who encourage their assistants to surfeit themselves with dainties at starting in order that they may be for ever after abstemious. One day, having scanned his wife's attire, he remarked that it would not do for Paris, and took her to the eminent M. Worth's.

"Monsieur Worth," he said, "I have brought you my wife, and give you *carte blanche*; she relies on you to make her presentable."

M. Worth smirked with the air of a man who sees an exquisite picture very poorly framed.

"If Madame will put herself in our hands I think we shall be able to do justice to her rare beauty."

"That is exactly what she wants," said Paul pleasantly; "so say you make her a dozen dresses to begin with."

"Oh, Paul, a dozen!" exclaimed Aimée, with her provincial notions of economy quite startled.

"My dear child, M. Worth will tell you that a dozen are not too many if you are to hold your own against your good friends. I even question whether they will be enough."

From M. Worth's Aimée was taken to the bonnet-maker's, furrier's, lace-maker's, glover's, and finally to the jeweller's. Of some hundred thousand francs which had been lying at Paul's banker's, two-thirds melted away at once in preparations for making Aimée presentable to bevy of women, not one of whom was half as comely as herself. But Paul disbursed without counting. "When she reflects that we are

wasting our boy's money, perhaps she will feel a twinge," was his calculation.

Aimée, however, was in no more mood for reflecting than is a person who drinks champagne for the first time. During the first month the novelty of her position made her just a little shy and awkward; at the end of the second month she wore her fine low dresses with ease, had learned to improve her complexion with potato-flour (*vulgo* violet-powder), and had discovered that Nature had not given her hair sufficient without a chignon. At the end of the third month she had already marked herself a place in society; her drawing-room was a resort for wits; she could herself launch a repartee; and from week to week she lived the customary life of a woman of the world in all respects save one—church-going. Nothing would persuade her to attend Sunday mass or any other religious celebration. When she went by a church she could not help turning away her head and reddening, as though she were passing a house where she had done something wrong.

It was at the end of this third month that Paul d'Arley's new comedy was brought out at the Théâtre Français. There was a general curiosity to note whether marriage, always a hazardous experiment with brain-workers, had made any difference in Paul's talent, and the house was crammed with celebrities. From first to last the piece was a triumphant success. Never had the author's dialogue been brighter, his characters so boldly drawn, his dramatic situations more telling; and when the curtain fell on the closing act the whole audience rose, enthusiastically acclaiming the man whose fame was now placed for ever beyond dispute. This scene was too much for Aimée's young nerves. She had watched the performance from a stage-box with one of her new friends, the Countess de Tréma, and when the audience, seeing that Paul did not answer their call, recognised his wife and turned towards her *en masse* to do her a public homage, she fell back, white and quivering in every limb, and swooned.

When she had been revived, and was driving home with the Countess, the latter said, with emotion,

"Dear Madame d'Arley, I do not wonder that you should have been so much moved, for your influence is discernible in every line of this new play, and you have good reason to be proud."

"How so?" murmured Aimée.

"Why, it is the first play of M. d'Arley's which sends one home with a heart full of soothing sentiments. In listening to his other works one is transported, thrilled, yet the philosophy is so disconsolate that the spectator goes away discouraged. But this comedy we have just seen is a beautiful idyll—the work of a happy man."

Aimée answered nothing. In the last scene, where the hero, after trying adventures, settles down into a blissful home, Paul had arranged with the scene-painter to represent his own country-house, "The Elms," and on beholding this unexpected picture Aimée's eyes had filled with

tears. Her heart overflowed now in listening to the Countess—but, once again, temples are not rebuilt in a day.

IV.

Eighteen months elapsed. During that time the d'Arays travelled to the sea-side, thence to Monaco, then went on a round of visits to the country-seats of friends. Only once Aimée snatched a hurried week to go and see her child at "The Elms;" but she was impatient to get away again. Fashion had caught her in its whirlpool, and Paul in his weariness could detect in her no symptoms of a wish to resume her old habits. When, however, they returned to Paris for the winter season, an explanation between them became necessary for pecuniary reasons.

One morning Aimée came with a long face to say she was in debt. Her housekeeping accounts would not square with her budget, and she feared she had been extravagant in millinery. Paul made good the deficit with something over, but he took the opportunity of stating his resources. The sale of his books and the performances of his plays brought him about 80,000 francs a year, which was a sufficient income for ease, but not for squandering. His remonstrances were very gently worded, but to his surprise Aimée showed irritation at them. She was not at all the same Aimée as of yore. Her fresh complexion was fading under the influence of cosmetics and late hours, and her manners had something too deliberate in them.

"What you say is very just, Paul," she remarked, plucking at her smart dress; "but we could be richer if you pleased. Why are you so idle?"

"Idle, Aimée? That is the last reproach I should have thought of hearing from you."

"Well, I assure you I am not the person who originated it," she said doggedly. "A publisher was telling me the other day that you could earn four times what you are doing now if you chose to work more. And it's a fact that I have seen you writing half a day to fill three small sheets of paper."

"Well, yes, I have been almost three years about my new novel, which is now in the publisher's hands," admitted Paul quietly. "If I wrote more I might possibly be richer, but those few sheets of paper will give us something better than money, Aimée—a fame which will, I trust, live after both of us."

"Oh fame—fame!" exclaimed Aimée, pouting; "as if you had not enough of that already. And when we are both dead what can it matter to us, pray, whether your glory is more or less? The present is what we have to think of."

Paul was shocked by this application of his theories.

"You forget our boy, Aimée," he said.

"No, it's you who forget him," ejaculated Mme. d'Aray crossly. "You

work, thinking only of yourself, as if our boy could make an income out of your name! If you did your duty as a father, you would labour to leave him a large fortune."

This was not the first little cloud that had sprung up between the two, but it was the first that caused Paul d'Arley the acute pang of feeling that his wife's heart was no longer in unison with his own. He soon had a much greater cause of trouble, for Aimée became jealous of him.

It was perfectly simple that she should have become so, for there had insensibly grown up between them that estrangement which is inevitable when husband and wife have contrary tastes and follow different pursuits. Paul had not time to dance attendance on Aimée in all her mundane excursions. He was busy with his novel—that novel which he had begun in his honeymoon, and was ending under the cruel regret of a happiness which seemed to have gone for ever. He hoped much of this work, and toiled carefully at it; and then he had academical duties. He had been deputed to report on the essays and poems to which the Academy awards yearly prizes, and Government had put him on a Committee for inquiring into International Copyright. As his house was always filled with visitors and with the noisy incomings of milliners and *costumiers*, he had hired private chambers where he could work undisturbed, and here he spent most of his days. He and Aimée seldom saw each other except at dinner-time. They had separate apartments, and M^{de}. d'Arley seldom returned from her balls and routs till the small hours, not long before the time when Paul was accustomed to get up. All this was Aimée's fault, not Paul's; but, womanlike, she came to fancy herself neglected. She would have had her husband accompany her in all her frivolous amusements, and when she found it impossible to prevail upon him so to do, she readily hearkened to the suggestions of her old evil-councillor, M^{de}. de Marœuil, that Paul secretly bestowed on other women the attentions to which she was entitled.

Nothing could have been less true, but M^{de}. de Marœuil and Aimée had become fast friends, and the former was anxious to repay the grudge which she owed Paul for the latter's violent threats. One evening at a ministerial party, when Aimée was looking more than usually out of spirits, M^{de}. de Marœuil settled beside her on an ottoman, and adroitly led up the conversation to Paul d'Arley's private doings.

"Did you not tell me, dear, that your husband had lodgings in town?"

"Yes, he goes there every morning, and says he works. We are so little together that I have no time to question him."

"I wouldn't question him—men never tell the truth; but if I were you, I would keep an eye on M^{de}. de Tréma."

"M^{de}. de Tréma!" ejaculated Aimée, with a sudden flush. "Why do you think that she and Paul —; but it's impossible, she is one of my best friends."

"Reason the more. All I can say is, that I saw her brougham

standing at the door where M. d'Arley's chambers are. But mind, no scenes or hysterics, dear. If M. d'Arley plays you false, you should take a leaf out of his own books; remember his theories in *La Femme d'un Sot*, and make him jealous in his turn."

Now it was a fact that Paul d'Arley had elaborated a theory very much approved by French writers, and which may be summed up in the axiom that marital affection seldom lasts long, unless the wife can promote jealousy. This beautiful lesson was not lost upon Aimée. She had a host of admirers, and in the hope that she might bring Paul to look more closely after her, she singled out one—a handsome, puppy-like officer named de Marillac—and flirted systematically with him under Paul's eyes. Unfortunately Paul noticed nothing. He was too sensitive to ridicule to play the part of a Bluebeard, all the more so as he knew that many eyes in society were humorously watching to see whether he feared for himself the connubial woes which he had showered on so many personages in his books. So, although M. de Marillac was continually dangling about his house, danced with Aimée at balls, called on her in her box at the opera and theatres, and disported himself generally as only an amorous Frenchman can do, Paul paid not the slightest attention to him, acting like a man who feels secure of his wife's purity, and of his own. But this did not suit M^{me}. de Marceuil.

When the flirtation between Aimée and the officer had been lasting three months—and let it be admitted that it was on Aimée's part a very innocent flirtation—Madame de Marceuil sought an opportunity to warn Paul, and make him miserable. The author was often compelled to escort his wife for an hour or two to official parties, and it was on one of these occasions that Madame de Marceuil glided up to him with a smiling look of effrontery.

"Well, my old enemy, it is a long time since we have spoken to each other. Is it still your intention to gibbet me?"

"You did me so much harm, Madame," answered Paul, gravely, "that no reprisals of mine would be an adequate revenge; therefore I forgive you."

"That's kindly spoken, but I have always meant better by you than you suspect, Monsieur d'Arley, and to give you a proof I must warn you now to observe your wife. She is young and inexperienced, and I am afraid she will be compromising herself with M. de Marillac. See them both together now. Well, it's like that every evening."

Paul glanced in the direction indicated, and not a muscle of his face betrayed that he was in the slightest degree moved. But the blow had come upon him like a bullet. For the first time the disproportion in age between his wife and himself occurred to him. She was almost a child, he was past middle age; she had married to be free from the restraints of convent life, he had taken a wife to find rest after a laborious and distracted career. But how ludicrous might he not seem to her, with his melancholy pinings after that humdrum existence which she in her ex-

uberant youth despised! He turned over this new reflection in many ways; nevertheless, he did not speak to Aimée about the officer. He waited till he had proof positive of her guilt or levity, whichever it might be, and it was not until he had observed the pair closely for another week that he resolved to remonstrate with Aimée, whom he saw, or fancied he saw, to have been merely giddy.

It happened that the day on which he took this resolution was the eve of that on which his novel, *Le Mariage d'Amour*, was to be published. In that book he had poured out his whole heart in pictures of the felicity of tranquil love in wedded life, and, with the intuition which seldom fails an author who writes conscientiously, he felt that his work was powerful enough to move a reader; and he hoped—with what anxiety he himself only knew—that it might move Aimée. The early copies of the work had been sent by the publisher, and Paul took one of them to give his wife. Just as he was going towards her apartments a letter was brought him from St. Riequier, announcing that his child had been seized with an attack of hooping-cough; and this communication, though distressing, appeared to have come just in time to serve his purpose.

He found Aimée in her dressing-room, surrounded by tulle, silks and jewels, and other extravagant preparations for a fancy-dress ball."

"I am sorry to say our boy is ill, Aimée," he said, handing her the letter, and laying the book on the table. "I think we had better both go down to St. Riequier to-night."

"Oh, it's impossible!" she exclaimed. "There's a ball at the Austrian Ambassadors'."

This was thoughtlessly, not heartlessly said, but so unmotherly a reply filled Paul with pain and some indignation.

"Supposing our child were to die while you were dancing?" he said, severely.

"Oh, please don't talk in that depressing way, Paul. Let me see what the letter says. Hooping-cough; all children have hooping-cough; and this, the nurse says, is but a slight attack. We will go to-morrow morning—the first thing, if you like. But what are you staring at?"

"Your dress—you are not going to wear that?"

"Why not, pray?"

"Because it is fit only for an actress—not an honest woman."

"Dear me!" exclaimed Aimée, mockingly. "And do you know where I got the idea of that improper dress? Why, out of one of your own books! One of your heroines—a Duchess—dresses as a Naiad for a Tuileries fête, and you fill two whole pages with sarcasms against her dreary husband, who objected to see her show off her beauty becomingly!"

Paul bit his lips. At every turn in his wedded life some sin of his pen was finding him out.

"You know I never proposed my books to you as models of morality," he said, reddening. "I wrote many things when I was young of which I am ashamed now. But there is another thing about which I

wished to warn you, Aimée. People are observing that you behave rather too unguardedly with M. de Marillac."

"Aha! so your eyes condescend to look after your wife at last!" cried Aimée, folding her arms, and gazing at him with flashes of stung pride. She was in a passion, her hair was falling over her shoulders, and she looked pretty and strange enough in her wildness. "Yes, it's true. M. de Marillac is fonder of my company than my own husband is. But before you have a right to reproach me, Paul, you must break off your relations with Madame de Tréma!"

"With Madame de Tréma? What an absurdity, Aimée! Will you accept my assurance that I have not spoken a hundred words with the Countess in the course of a twelvemonth?"

"You're bound to say so of course, but others tell me differently; and if you mean to use your liberty, Paul, I shall use mine."

"Not to go to this ball I hope. I ask you once again, Aimée, to come with me to St. Riequier, and to be more careful for the future in your conduct with that officer."

"And here is my answer," cried Aimée, defiantly. "I will go to the ball, and I shall wear the dress which you put on your Duchess, and I shall dance twice with M. de Marillac, as I have promised him to do, and if you are not satisfied you must mend your behaviour to me, which has been unkind and unmanly to a degree."

"Very well, Aimée," said Paul, with a pale face. "I am not a tyrant, but when a woman disobeys her husband, and seems disposed to trifle with his honour, she brings punishment on the man who abets her misconduct," and with these words he left the room.

Aimée was a little frightened at what she had done; but she was secretly glad at having stirred Paul to jealousy, and flattered herself that in the journey which she truly proposed making with him on the morrow, a reconciliation might ensue between them. She cried, and if Paul had come back at that moment, she would have flung her arms round his neck and prayed his forgiveness. But he did not return; so she set off to the ball in her Naiad's dress, danced twice with M. de Marillac as she had promised him, and talked to him with a loud forced gaiety, whilst her heart fluttered terribly as she saw her husband coldly gazing at them both. What followed may be soon told. Social conventions in France oblige a man to maintain his honour at the sword's point. Paul d'Arley glided up to M. de Marillac and beckoned him aside.

"Monsieur," he said calmly, "we are both men who can understand each other at a word. If you will name your seconds, we can settle our differences before daybreak."

The officer understood and bowed. "I must only declare to you that Madame is innocent," he added.

"I never doubted it," answered Paul, quietly.

So a few hours later, and just before dawn, Paul d'Arley and the officer met in the Bois de Vincennes. The duel could not be a long one. M. de

Marillac scarcely defended himself, and after a few passes Paul touched him on the chest. The seconds at sight of blood stopped the fight, and Paul, whose honour was conventionally satisfied by this scratch, returned to his house. The first thing that met him on his arrival was a telegram announcing that his child had suddenly died.

He sat down with a heavy sigh and reflected. Truth to say, it had not needed this announcement of his boy's death to prompt him to the fatal course he was now about to take; but his bereavement justified his resolution. Of what use or pleasure was his life to him now? He had pondered this question ever since he thought he had read in Aimée's eyes that she had ceased to love him, and the answer was this, that the sooner he was out of the world the better. He was growing old; his wife had many years of life before her; better leave her free to enjoy them since such was her bent. He was not moulded of the stuff to make domestic despots, and yet he loved his wife too well to bear her infidelity or discontent with resignation.

Coldly and tranquilly, without quaver or bravado, he unlocked a cupboard and drew out a case of pistols, chose one and loaded. But as he stood on that brink of eternity where so many other men have hesitated, what was it that made the sceptic pause a minute? It was grey morning, but there on his desk, beaming very white in the dim light, lay the ivory crucifix which had once hung in his wife's room, and which he had kept since the day when she had discarded it.

He took it up and looked wistfully at it, then for Aimée's sake he raised it to his lips. He had just done so, when it seemed to him that a door opened, and down the passage came, with quick steps and a panting breath, a footfall light as a child's flying for succour. It approached; now it was nearer.

"Who's there?" cried Paul, startled.

The door was not locked; it opened, and Aimée stood on the threshold, hugging her husband's new book to her breast, and looking at him with eyes brimming.

"I have read it to the last line, Paul," she cried, in a broken voice, and she flung herself at his feet. "Oh my darling, let us go back to our home. I do not think we have been either of us happy since that wretched day when I disobeyed you. But God is good, and you believe in him as I do; in every word of this noble book there is Christian faith; and see, my darling, you are crying!"

Hospital Outlines : Sketches and Portraits.

SKETCHES.

I. FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

The mist of morn still drapes the clattering street,
 The northern summer air is dank and cold,
 And, lo, the Hospital—grey, quiet, old :
 My only hope, the Art's best loved retreat.

Through the loud emptiness and airy gloom,
 A small, strange child, so old and yet so young !
 Her little arm besplinted and beslung,
 Precedes me gravely to the waiting-room.

Sequent I limp—my confidence is gone ;
 The grey-haired soldier-porter bids me on,
 And on I limp, and still my spirits fail :

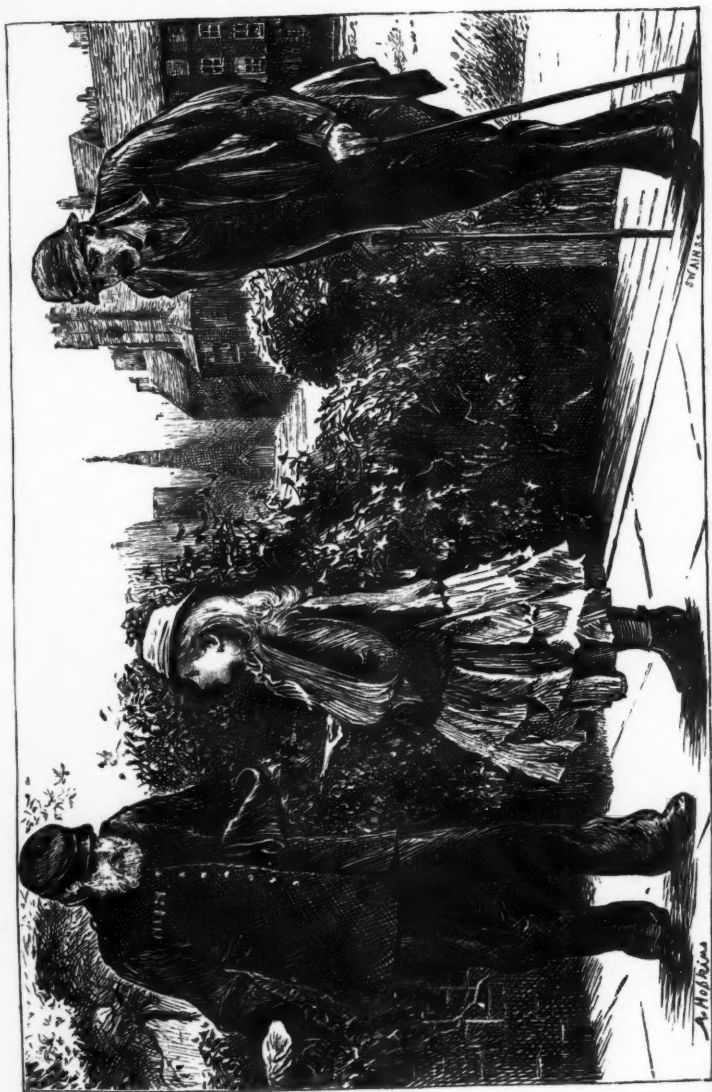
A tragic meanness seeming to environ
 These corridors and stairs of stone and iron,
 Chill, gaunt, and clean—half workhouse and half jail.

II. WAITING.

A square, squat room that stinks of drugs and dust,
 The walls and atmosphere a brownish drab.
 The floor is foul ; fair is the dressing-slab
 With spotless lint, and tinware pure of rust.

A lank, bare bench shrinks round three sides, and there,
 While certain smart young flippant Shallows tend
 Such ills as Art incipient may amend,
 Two endless hours I sit, and ache, and swear.

The decent woman strips her plastered eye ;
 The two old men their two old ulcers bare ;
 The boy, his leg unbandaged, starts to cry ;



"THE GRAY HAIR'D SOLDIER-FORTER HIDS ME ON."

1874

The girl, tight-lipped—'Yon bluestane's awfu' sair!'
To shut mine ears and raise my heart I try,
Thinking of darker hours that long since were.

III. THE WARD.

Four long brown walls—a waste of plaster, bare
Save in some ragged prints; a glowing grate;
A flooring half of boards, half flagged with slate;
A crowd of bottles; space and light and air;

A lean gas pipe; a table slim and spare,
With bandages and lint; seven truckle beds,
Above whose coarse red rugs the horrent heads
Of seven pale poor devils turn and stare.

Some read; some knit; some sit up wearily,
Resting their arms upon their crooked knees;
Some sleep: more laughter comes from them than
moan.

This is a ward in hospital. You see
The field where Science battles with Disease,
And Hope—sweet Hope—succumbs to Death alone.

IV. THE VISIT.

A many-footed rush resounds without,
Through the long, flagged, deep-vaulted corridor,
And in the Surgeon strides, at least three-score
Of pupils with him—learner, dandy, lout.

He walks as one who is not vexed with doubt;
They straggle after him across the floor,
Silent, respectful of his place and lore,
Not always keen for what he is about.

Presenting to contemplative beholders
A curious plump of sentient backs and shoulders,
They group themselves about a certain bed;

A few short words you cannot catch, are said;
Then comes a silence, and your pulses quicken;
And then a crunch of bone and steel—You sicken.

V. BEFORE OPERATION.

Behold me gruesome, waiting for the knife!
A little while, and at a leap I storm
The thick sweet mystery of chloroform,
The drunken dark, the little Death-in-life.

The gods are good to me: I have no wife,
No helpless child, to think of as I near
The fateful minute; nothing all too dear
Unmans me for my hour of passive strife.

Yet am I tremulous and somewhat sick;
And, face to face with chance, I shrink a little.
My hopes are strong, but ah! my will is weak.

Here comes the basket. *Euge!* I am ready.
But, gentlemen my porters, life is brittle;
You carry Cæsar and his fortune—steady!

VI. AFTER OPERATION.

Like a weak light involved in heavy smoke,
So through the anæsthetic shows my life;
So flashes and so falls my thought, at strife
With the strong stupor that I gasp and choke

And sicken at, it is so foully sweet.
Faces look strange from space—and disappear.
Far voices, sudden-loud, offend mine ear—
To hush as sudden—all my senses fleet.

All is away—except a heavy pain,
Grinding through leg and foot. And, brokenly,
Time and the place glimpse on to me again.

And, unsurprised, out of uncertainty,
I wake—relapsing—somewhat faint and fain,
To an immense complacent dreamery.

VII. NIGHT PICTURE.

Implacable, the speck of gas compels
My fascinated eyes, and makes them sore;
Perverse, the bedclothes ramble, more and more;
Like rockery the mattress sinks and swells.

The men are slumbering, but my soul rebels
Against one resolute, sonorous snore;
An opiated, exasperating roar,
The murder of my sweet first doze it knells.

Waking I dream. My sleepy fancy plumbs
The sea of my mishap; a cinder drops;
The shadow pulses as the loud flames fret;

My neighbour groans and turns; the snorer stops,
Chokes, gasps him free again; the night-nurse comes,
Noiseless and strange: "Are ye no' sleepin' yet?"

VIII. ANOTHER.

Round one poor bed is stretched the painted screen,
Whose leaves extemporise a decent gloom,
Where Death and Life, as in a private room,
Meet, and arrange the honours of the scene.

The shadows melt into the growing grey;
The gas burns pale. My thoughts are gruesome yet,
But my vague sense of impotent regret
Fades in my pipe's blue tender whorls away.

Before the creaking fire the widow cries,
Huddled and hushed; the fresh, young night-nurse dozes;
We talk by fits, or think—for in this wise

A gaunt Perhaps itself to us discloses ;
 And lo, the sun ! strong for his new emprise,
 All Hope and Health, superb with wild mist roses.

IX. FLORAL.

Broad through the open door there stole to me,
 Homesick and tired, a sudden smell of flowers :
 A memory of mists, and suns, and showers,
 Borne beautiful among my reverie.

Two girls came in. They carried, fair to see,
 The homely growths of autumn, sweets and sour,
 With waifs and strays of summer's golden hours
 Tied up in little nosegays daintily.

To each of us they gave, as, week by week,
 Nature's cheap gems among the hurt and sick,
 With kindest instinct beautiful they share ;

And when they left the close infirmary reek,
 A sweet abnormal savour lingered there
 Of sunburnt green, clear space, and country air.

PORTRAITS.

I. A SURGEON.

His brow spreads large and quiet, and his eye
 Is deep and bright, with steady looks that still ;
 Soft lines of tranquil thought his face fulfill ;
 His face at once benign, and proud, and shy.

If envy scout, if ignorance decry,
 His faultless patience, his unyielding will,
 Beautiful gentleness and splendid skill,
 Innumerable gratuities reply.

His wise, rare smile is sweet with certainties,
 And seems in all his patients to compel
 A love and faith that failure cannot quell.

They hold him for another Herakles,
Warring with Custom, Prejudice, Disease,
As once the son of Zeus with Death and Hell.

II. A STUDENT.

A little black man, admirably neat,
Extremely 'gentleman' from head to foot,
All glossy hat, white shirt, and shiny boot,
Gold links and chain, and kerchief smelling sweet.

He soaks his hair in water till the curl
Peculiar to his race will smooth away,
And visits his moustaches day by day,
Though yet, in this respect, a very girl.

His traits?—resentful and suspicious vanity,
Showy dexterity, logical humanity,
Thin brilliance, commonplace intelligence:

And, over all, unquenchable, immense,
Alert to smile and bow, to watch and wait,
An egotism making these things great.

III. STAFF-NURSE: OLD STYLE.

The supreme poets of the common place,
George Eliot and Rembrandt—only these
Could paint her all to you: experienced ease,
And antique liveliness and ponderous grace;

The sweet old roses of her sunken face,
The depth and motive of her sly grey eyes;
The broad Scots tongue that flatters, scolds, defies,
The thick Scots wit that fells you like a mace.

These thirty years has she been nursing here,
Some of them under Syme, her hero still.
Much is she worth, and even more is made of her.

Patients and students hold her very dear.

The doctors love her, tease her, use her skill.

They say 'The Chief' himself is half afraid of her.

IV. LADY PROBATIONER.

This is her picture:—Seven and thirty years;

A Roman nose, a dimpling double chin,

And dark, shy eyes, if ignorant of sin,

Not unacquainted, it would seem, with tears;

A comely shape; a slim, high-coloured hand,

Graced, rather oddly, with a signet ring;

A bashful air becoming everything;

A-well bred silence always at command.

Her plain print gown, prim cap, and bright steel chain

Look out of place on her, and I remain

Absorbed in her, as in a pleasant mystery.

Quick, skilful, quiet, soft in speech and touch—

'Do you like nursing?' 'Yes, Sir, very much.'

Do you not guess (with me) she has a history?

V. STAFF-NURSE: NEW STYLE.

Blue-eyed and bright of face, but waning fast

Into the sere of virginal decay,

I view her as she enters, day by day,

As a sweet sunset almost overpast.

Kindly and calm, patrician to the last,

Superbly falls the gown of sober grey,

And on her chignon's elegant array

A cap receives the impress of her caste.

She talks Beethoven, frowns disapprobation

At Balzac's name, and sighs at Madame Sand's,

Knows that she has exceeding pretty hands.

Speaks Latin words with due accentuation,
And gives at need, as one who understands,
A draught, a judgment, or an exhortation.

VI. A SCRUBBER.

Behold her! Gaunt, and in her hard sad face,
With flashes of the old fun's animation,
The fixed and somewhat peevish resignation
Left of a past where trouble waxed apace.

Apace indeed! Her 'man,' before he died,
Saw seven of their children pass away,
But never knew the little lass at play
Out on the green—her joy, her hope, her pride.

Her kin dispersed, her friends forgot and gone,
All simple faith her honest Irish mind,
Scolding her spoiled wee saint—she labours on,
Telling her dreams, taking her patients' part,
Trailing her coat sometimes!—and you shall find
No rougher, quainter speech, no kinder heart.

VII. A PATIENT.

John Gallagher—'mad Jack'—from Donegal,
Aged five-and-forty; reaper, shearer, sinker,
Adores Saint Blackthorn, is a furious drinker,
And, to the priest, a very sheep withal;
Has tramped through Britain, can the route recall;
Believes in ghosts, but in his way 's a thinker;
Once threw a tinker's baby at the tinker;
Holds Willie Wallace first of heroes all.
Fell, eighteen months ago, some thirty feet,
Smashing his shin. The cure's almost complete,
And lusty still, save when the surgeon eyes him,
He like a collier swears, prays like a child,
Roars like a bison, laughs like something wild,
And makes us all like, pity, and despise him.

VIII. A VISITOR.

Her little face is like a walnut shell
With wrinkling lines; her soft white hair adorns
Her either brow in quaint straight curls, like horns,
And all about her clings an old sweet smell.

She wears prim stuffs and puritanic shawls,
Her bonnets might have well been born on her.
Can you conceive a fairy godmother
Devoted to conventicles and calls?

In snow or shine, from bed to bed she runs,
Her mittened hands that always give, or pray,
Bearing a sheaf of tracts, a bag of buns:

All twinkling smiles and texts and pious tales,
A wee old maid that sweeps the Bridegroom's way,
Strong in a cheerful trust that never fails.

IX. CHILDREN: PRIVATE WARD.

Here in this dim, dull, double-bedded room
I am the father of a brace of boys,
Ailing, but apt for every sort of noise,
Bedfast, but brilliant yet with healthful bloom.

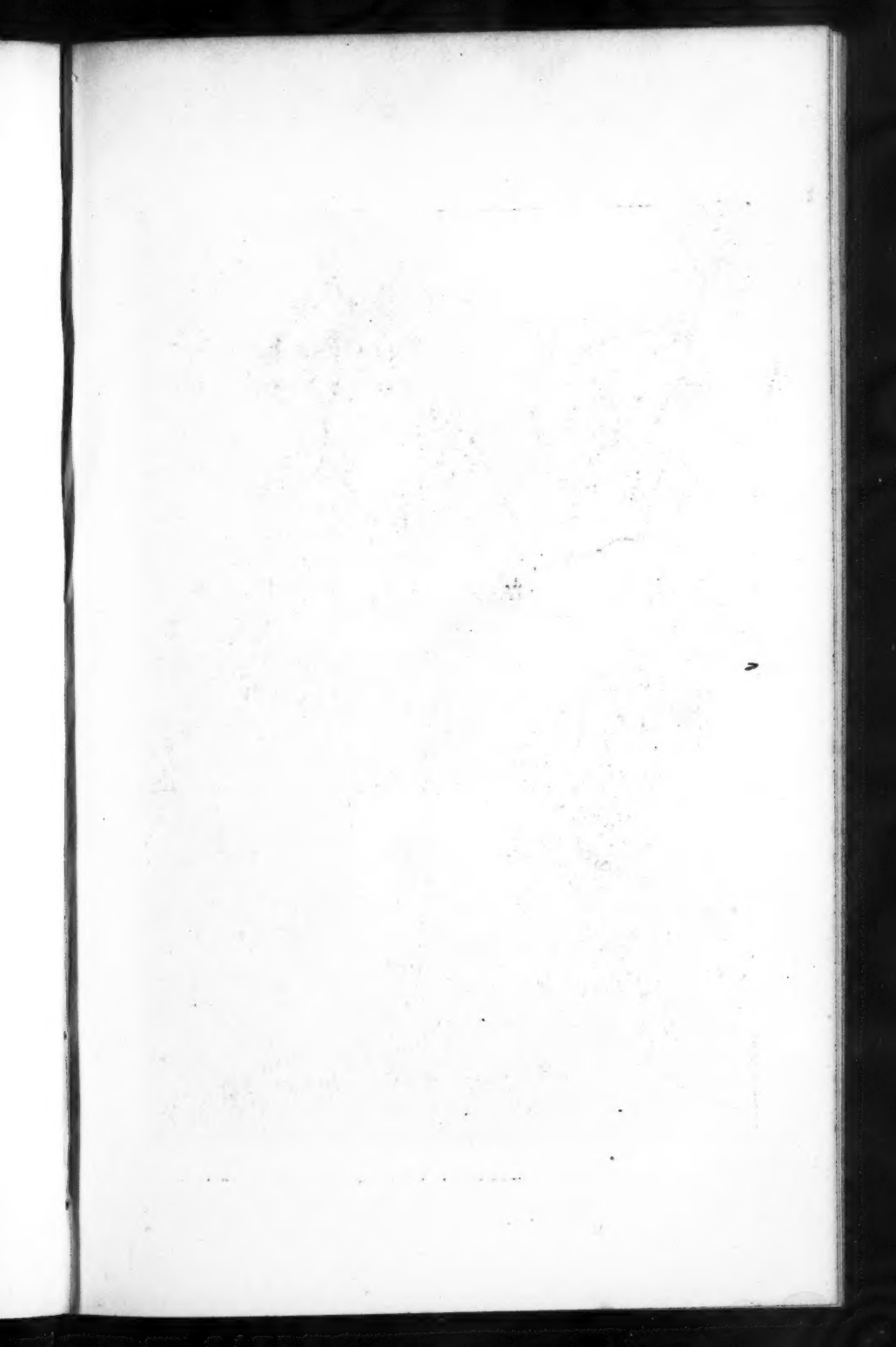
Roden, the Irishman, is 'sie-ven past,'
Blue-eyed, snub-nosed, and chubby-fair of face.
Willie's but six, and seems to like the place,
A cheerful little collier to the last.

They eat and laugh and sing and fight all day.
All night they sleep like dormice. See them play
At Operations—Roden, the Professor,

Saws, lectures, takes the vessels up, and ties:
Willie, self-chloroformed, with half-shut eyes,
Holding the limb and moaning—Case and Dresser.

WILLIAM ERNEST HENLEY.

Royal Infirmary, Edinburgh.





"PERHAPS IT WILL BE MORE SATISFACTORY IF I PAY A QUARTER'S RENT IN ADVANCE."

